

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN EMPLOYEE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES AND OCCUPATIONAL
SOCIAL WORK IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

By

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Abstract

Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work were established to help employees deal with life tasks, thus the disciplines view the employee as a sole client system. Consequently, there is a clear link between the two disciplines. However, a theoretical and practical comparison between them still lacks in literature. For this reason, the researcher saw a need for a research study that would conceptualise Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work in theory and in practice. The current study was carried out to investigate the two disciplines in an attempt to deduce a contrast between them. Similarly, the goal of the study was to compare Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work in order to explore and describe the similarities and differences.

A qualitative research approach was utilised in the study to explore and understand the meanings that participants attributed to EAPs and OSW in practice. The researcher used the random sampling method to choose participants from the data base of EAP professionals/practitioners and Occupational Social Workers provided by the Employee Assistance Programmes Association of South Africa and the South African Occupational Social Work Association. The data was collected from a small sample of 13 participants. E-mail interviews were used to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences and thoughts on their respective fields. An interview schedule was used as a guide during the interview. The data was then organised, thematically and systematically analysed and interpreted.

The empirical findings on Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work indicated distinct similarities and differences between the two disciplines. The similarities between the two disciplines were in relation to the types

of employee issues that they deal with, workplace services and programmes, service objectives and therapeutic approaches utilised. The differences, on the other hand, were related to the practice and service delivery models and the notion that the one is seen as more of a profession than the other.

The current study demonstrated the necessity of a research study in this specific area. The research successfully identified and described the similarities and differences between the two disciplines and therefore contributes to the body of knowledge and to future research studies.

Key Words:

Employee Assistance Programmes

Occupational Social Work

Employee Assistance Professionals Association of South Africa

South African Occupational Social Workers Association

EAP Professional/Practitioner

Occupational Social Worker

Employees

Organisation

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this research report, entitled 'A Comparative Study between Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work in a South African context', is my own work and that the report has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university. I have given full acknowledgement to the sources I have used in the research.

Tsholofelo Cathrine Maseko

Table of Contents

	Page No.
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Problem formulation	3
1.3. Rationale of the study	4
1.4. Research goal and objectives	4
1.4.1. Research goal	4
1.4.2. Research objectives	4
1.5. Research Questions	5
1.6. Theoretical framework	5
1.6.1. Ecological systems theory	5
1.7. Research approach	7
1.7.1. Qualitative research approach	7
1.8. Research design	8
1.9. Research methods	8
1.9.1. Study population and sampling	8
1.9.2. Data collection	9
1.9.3. Data analysis	9
1.10. Pilot study	9
1.11. Ethical considerations: A theoretical foundation	10
1.11.1. Voluntary participation and informed consent	10
1.11.2. Violation of anonymity/privacy/confidentiality	11
1.11.3. Compensation	11
1.11.4. Actions and competence of the researcher	12
1.11.5. Publication of findings	12
1.12. Definition of concepts	13
1.12.1. Employee	13
1.12.2. Organisation	13
1.12.3. Service provider	13
1.12.4. EAP practitioner	13

1.12.5.	EAP professional	14
1.12.6.	Employee Assistance Programmes	14
1.12.7.	Occupational Social Work	14
1.13.	Limitations to the study	14
1.13.1.	Geographical location	14
1.13.2.	Sampling method	15
1.13.3.	Data collection instrument	15
1.13.4.	Informed consent and confidentiality	16
1.13.5.	Interview questions	16
1.14.	Outline of the research report	16
1.14.1.	Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to the study	16
1.14.2.	Chapter 2: Theoretical comparison between EAP and OSW	17
1.14.3.	Chapter 3: Research Methodology	17
1.14.4.	Chapter 4: Empirical findings on the similarities and differences between EAPs and OSW	17
1.14.5.	Chapter 5: Key findings, Conclusions and Recommendations	18
1.15.	Summary	18
 CHAPTER 2		
 A THEORETICAL COMPARISON BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES AND OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK.		
2.1.	Introduction	19
2.2.	Definition of EAPs and OSW	20
2.2.1.	Employee Assistance Programmes	20
2.2.2.	Occupational Social Work	21
2.3.	Historical overview and reasons for establishment of EAPs and OSW	22
2.3.1.	Historical background and rationale for EAPs	22
2.3.2.	Historical and societal context of OSW	23
2.4.	EAP and OSW client systems and service users	26
2.4.1.	EAP service users	26
2.4.2.	OSW client systems	28
2.5.	Core technologies and functions of EAPs and OSW	29

2.5.1. EAP workplace functions	29
2.5.2. OSW work-programme functions	32
2.6. Scope of practice and types of services	34
2.6.1. EAP scope of practice	35
2.6.1.1. Programme design	35
2.6.1.2. Implementation	35
2.6.1.3. Management and administration	35
2.6.1.4. Clinical services	36
2.6.1.5. Non-clinical services	36
2.6.1.6. Proactive services	36
2.6.1.7. Stakeholder management	36
2.6.1.8. Monitoring and evaluation	36
2.6.2. OSW scope of practice and types of services	38
2.6.2.1. Policy, planning and administration	38
2.6.2.2. Direct practice with individuals, families and special population	39
2.6.2.3. Practice that combines direct services and administration/policy formulation	39
2.7. Service delivery and practice models	41
2.7.1. EAP service delivery models	41
2.7.2. OSW practice model	44
2.8. Requirements for practice	50
2.8.1. Requirements for practice in EAP	50
2.8.2. OSW requirements for practice	55
2.9. Summary	57

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction	59
3.2. Type of Research	59
3.3. Research design	60
3.3.1. Case studies	60
3.3.1.1. Collective case studies	60
3.3.2. Advantages and disadvantages of case studies	61

3.4.	Research methods	62
3.4.1.	Study population and sampling	62
3.4.1.1.	Population	62
3.4.1.2.	Sampling	63
3.4.2.	Data collection	64
3.4.2.1.	Data collection method	64
3.4.2.2.	Data collection instrument	65
3.4.3.	Data analysis	67
3.4.3.1.	Collecting and organising data	67
3.4.3.2.	The process of thematic analysis	68
3.4.3.3.	Data quality	70
3.4.4.	Pilot study	72
3.4.4.1.	Literature study	72
3.4.4.2.	Pilot study of interview schedule	73
3.4.4.3.	Feasibility of study	74
3.5.	Practical application of ethical considerations	75
3.5.1.	Voluntary participation and informed consent	75
3.5.2.	Confidentiality	76
3.5.3.	Compensation	76
3.5.4.	Actions and competence of the researcher	76
3.5.5.	Publication of findings	76
3.5.6.	Ethics committee	77
3.6.	Summary	77

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES AND OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK.

4.1.	Introduction	78
4.2.	Participants' Profile	79
4.3.	Identified major themes	81
4.3.1.	THEME 1: CORE AREAS OF INTERVENTION	82
4.3.1.1.	Sub-theme 1: Employee issues	83

4.3.1.2. Sub-theme 2: Workplace roles and functions	84
4.3.1.3. Sub-theme 3: Programmes and services	86
4.3.1.4. Sub-theme 4: Key performance indicators	89
4.3.1.5. Sub-theme 5: Service delivery and practice models	90
4.3.1.6. Sub-theme 6: Service objectives	91
4.3.2. THEME 2: THERAPEUTIC COMPONENT	92
4.3.2.1. Sub-theme 1: Current therapeutic approach	93
4.3.2.2. Sub-theme 2: Cultural-appropriateness of therapeutic approach	94
4.3.2.3. Sub-theme 3: Views of a culturally-based therapeutic model	95
4.3.3. THEME 3: REGISTRATION WITH A STATUTORY BODY OR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION	96
4.3.3.1. Sub-theme 1: Impact of registration	96
4.3.4. THEME 4: VIEWS ON EAPs AND OSW	98
4.3.4.1. Sub-theme 1: Personal definition of EAPs and OSW	98
4.3.4.2. Sub-theme 2: Difference between EAP and OSW	100
4.4. Summary	102
CHAPTER 5	
KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1. Introduction	103
5.2. Summary of research	103
5.3. Key findings	105
5.3.1. Major findings from the literature review	105
5.3.2. Major findings from the empirical data	107
5.3.3. Major findings in response to the research questions	109
5.4. Recommendations	113
5.4.1. Recommendations based on findings	113
5.4.2. Recommendations for future research	114
5.5. Concluding remarks	115
6. References	116
7. List of Tables	
Table 4.1: Participants' Profile	78

Table 5.1: Theoretical Comparison between OSW and EAPs	110
Table 5.2: Practical Comparison between OSW and EAPs	111

8. List of Figures

Figure 4.1: Themes and Sub-themes	82
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9. List of Annexures

Annexure A: Interview schedule	123
Annexure B: Invite to participate in the study	126
Annexure C: Informed consent	128
Annexure D: Ethical clearance	132
Annexure E: Permission letter from EAPA-SA	134
Annexure F: Permission letter from SAOSWA	136
Annexure G: Data Storage Form	138

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

The development of assistance services in the workplace is unclear and therefore is not easy to determine or understand. It can be thought of as a set of counteractions that range from social, economic, political, individual, practitioner and client services. These counteractions may or may not have been deliberate, however, their interrelatedness, has to some extent, led to the present position of workplace assistance services.

One can certainly not deny the importance of psycho-social services in the workplace as these have been in existence for decades and have continued to evolve overtime. These services, rendered to employees and their families, are commonly referred to as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and Occupational Social Work (OSW). OSW is a branch of generic social work and is recognised as one of the core areas of social work intervention. It has further evolved into a specialised field and forms part of the EAP. Previously, organisations used to employ OSWs as part of EAPs to render social services to employees and their families. However, EAPs eventually dominated the scene, leading to an interchangeable use of the two terms (Mor Barak & Bargal, 2000:3).

OSW and EAP both identify the employee as the sole client system, thus the two disciplines may be thought of as indistinguishable. Moreover, the existence of OSW and EAP services in the workplace form a vital part of corporate culture and they

assist in improving and maintaining efficiency and motivation amongst employees. Therefore, they have a great potential in positively influencing workplace functioning.

In a South African context, subsequently, the two fields of practice are now recognised as independent, both equally rendering services to employees and employers (Terblanche, 2009:207; Du Plessis, 1994 in Van Breda, 2009:285). A professional association known as the EAP Association (EAPA) was established for persons in the EAP field. The association was established to ensure the highest level of professional standards and ethics as well as the continued development of employee assistance practitioners/professionals (EAPA-SA, 2016). In 1997, the EAPA-SA became an official branch of EAPA International. Similarly, the South African Occupational Social Workers Association (SAOSWA), formerly known as the Forum for Occupational Social Workers was established in 2003 to promote and protect the interests of OSWs and their clients (SAOSWA, 2018).

Despite the outlined similarities in the field as well as the struggles for independence and autonomy, the differences between EAP and OSW remain a blur in terms of their respective purposes, roles, goals, functions, scope of practice and service delivery approaches in the workplace.

For that reason, the researcher saw a need for a research study that would theoretically and practically conceptualise EAP and OSW in an effort to determine their similarities and differences. The study formed part of a group research project and it was conducted by the MSW EAP students from the University of Pretoria. Although the group investigated the same topic, individual researchers utilized different research methodologies.

This chapter introduces the reader to the background of the research project, formulation of the problem and rationale of the study. The researcher briefly contextualises the research methods and gives a theoretical viewpoint of the ethical considerations adopted in the study.

The next section will describe the problem that warranted the research study and the motivation for the study.

1.2. Problem Formulation

A review of literature suggests that there is very little, if any distinction between the EAP and OSW fields of practice. Some authors even suggest that the EAP is a subsection of OSW. Since their inception, the two fields have been closely linked. With the already outlined similarities between OSW and EAP, would it be accurate to assume that the fields are synonymous or that they fulfil the same roles and responsibilities in practice?

To the contrary, some authors argue that there is a difference between EAP and OSW. According to Thomson (in Jantjie, 2009:21) OSW focuses on general employee problems while EAPs follow a more clinical approach. Moreover, OSW services may only be rendered by registered social workers while EAPs may be rendered by staff members not qualified as professionals.

In light of the above, it is clear that there are very distinct similarities and differences between EAPs and OSW as highlighted by various authors. Empirical evidence, however, is still needed to clarify these similarities and differences between the two disciplines, both theoretically and practically. The undertaken investigation thus attempted to provide the answers to this knowledge gap. Through this study, the researcher aimed to investigate the two disciplines in an attempt to deduce the

similarities and differences. The research study compared the two disciplines to bring about a clearer understanding of each one's distinctiveness.

1.3. Rationale of the Study

A review of literature indicates distinct similarities and differences between the field of OSW and EAP, as highlighted by various authors. Both disciplines are referred to in text as workplace resources that aim to address various workplace problems. A study in this subject and specifically this area is therefore essential as it will help determine the similarities and differences between the two fields of practice in theory and in practice.

The collected data will describe the unique qualities and characteristics of EAPs and OSW, thus assisting both fields in their pursuit for independence and autonomy. The study will add to the body of knowledge of each field respectively.

Furthermore, exploring the specified problem will lay the groundwork that will lead to future research studies.

1.4. Research Goal and Objectives

The research study aimed to achieve the following goal:

1.4.1. Research Goal

The goal of the study was to compare EAPs and OSW in order to explore and describe the similarities and differences.

1.4.2. Research Objectives

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

- To conceptualise EAPs and OSW
- To explore and describe the similarities between OSW and EAP

- To explore and describe the differences between OSW and EAP.

1.5. Research Questions

Research questions involve “narrowing down the general interest in a research topic and focusing within the topic on a specific research problem that is small enough to be investigated” (Fox & Bayat, 2007:13). The researcher narrowed down the general interest of the research topic to formulate the research questions that the study attempted to answer.

And so, the following research questions guided the study:

- What are the similarities between OSW and EAP?
- What are the differences between OSW and EAP?

1.6. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of a research study aims to challenge the researcher to show an understanding of the main philosophical assumptions relating to the study. The theoretical framework that the researcher believed underpinned the study was the Ecological Systems Theory. The theoretical framework helped the researcher interpret key concepts of the research study and it provided a framework for analysis and interpretation of key findings.

1.6.1. Ecological Systems Theory

The Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes the need to “view people and environment as a unitary system within a particular cultural and historic context” (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2006:10). This theory was developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner who believed that systems consist of interrelated and interdependent elements that work together to achieve a common goal. The theory employs a systems approach to understanding multifaceted problems and phenomena (Khubeka, 2015:10).

The services and roles of OSW and EAP can only be fully understood in terms of their interrelationship between the person (employee) and the environment (workplace). In the context of the study, a thorough assessment and effective intervention are influenced by an approach that looks at the person and their environment, for these are important components in rendering social services.

The Ecological Systems Theory focuses on 'integration' and 'wholeness', and explains how different parts of a system can influence each other (Payne, 2015:193-194). Based on the theory, the researcher focused on the context within which EAP and OSW services are rendered. The description of the theory is in line with the evolution of OSW and its gradual shift from micro to macro practice. Essentially, it is the opinion of the researcher that the workplace organisation may be viewed as a macro system made up of smaller subsystems, including employees (as micro systems) who have a direct impact on each other. Therefore the workplace organisation has a direct influence on the employee and vice versa.

The systems theory is further explained by Payne (2015:194) in terms of how the public and private sector, as systems, interact with each other and how different change agents are involved. OSWs and EAPs in their respective fields within the workplace may be viewed as subsystems of the workplace macro system, rendering services to effect change and thus influencing other systems and subsystems within the workplace setting.

Based on the above description, the relevance of the systems theory to the study is irrefutable. The theory explores and demonstrates the EAP and OSW as individual systems that consist of interrelated and interdependent parts. Moreover, the researcher used the theory to determine the similarities and differences between the

two disciplines as subsystems in their individual macro systems. This was achieved by describing their purpose, roles, scope of practice and client systems within the workplace macro system.

1.7. Research Approach

1.7.1. Qualitative Research Approach

From an interpretivist viewpoint, the researcher tried to understand the social context and interpreted it through the perceptions of the research participants. This was done through exploring participants subjective experiences of reality in an attempt to conceptualise OSW and EAP theoretically and determine the similarities and differences in practice. The interpretivist paradigm is based on the assumption that there are multiple realities which can be discovered through human interaction and meaningful actions. The varying views, experiences, interpretations, meanings, perceptions and definitions of participants in relation to their respective fields of practice and workplace settings guide these realities (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:28).

For the reasons described above, the researcher made use of the qualitative research approach to explore and understand the meaning that the participants attributed to social and human problems (Creswell, 2014:10). Utilising the qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to examine the similarities and differences between OSW and EAP in depth. The direction of the research could therefore be revised as new information emerged for the purpose of the study.

The undertaken research was both explorative and descriptive in nature. The research was explorative because a comparison between OSW and EAP was a relatively new area of research and the use of this design contributed to breaking new ground and producing new understanding. According to Krishnaswamy,

Sivakumar, and Mathirajan (2006:161) an exploratory research project helps identify researchable problems and assists in achieving accuracy in problem formulation and the development of new courses of action. It aims to answer the question “what”. In the case of this study the “what” question was “What are the differences between OSW and EAP”?

Then again, the descriptive nature of the research project helped in describing and conceptualising OSW and EAP. The researcher observed phenomena and described what was observed as advised by Babbie (2017:92). Fouché and De Vos (2011:96) state that a descriptive type of research aims to answer the question “how” and “why”. In this study, the “how” and the “why” questions were “How are EAPs and OSW different or similar?” and “Why are they different or similar”?

1.8. Research Design

Bhattacharjee (2012:35) describes a research design as a complete plan used to describe three processes, namely, the process of collecting data, the process of developing an instrument, and the sampling process.

A case study research design was used to investigate two cases, that is, EAPs and OSW. Owing to the comparative nature of the research project, multiple case studies were adopted and assisted in comparing the two disciplines.

1.9. Research Methods

1.9.1. Study Population and Sampling

A study population can be described as a group of individuals or items from which samples can be drawn for measurement (Singh, 2007:88). In this study the target population was the members of EAPA-SA and SAOSWA. The target population was obtained from a source list provided by the two associations.

Singh (2007:88) defines a sample as a set of target respondents that are selected from a larger population for the purpose of the investigation. Theory identifies two sampling techniques, namely probability and non-probability sampling (Maree, 2003:36). The availability of a list of members from the two boards implied that the technique was probability and the type of sampling was random. Members were randomly picked from the list and shared among the different researchers as the research project was a group activity.

1.9.2. Data Collection

The data was collected from a small sample of participants through semi-structured e-mail interviews to gain an understanding of the participants' practical experiences relating to their respective fields. An interview schedule was prepared before-hand to guide the process of the interview.

1.9.3. Data Analysis

The researcher analysed the collected data from the research according to the objectives of the study. The data was organized according to themes, suggestions and concerns, thematically and systematically analysed and then finally interpreted. The steps taken towards analyzing data were followed as prescribed by Clark, Braun and Hayfield (2015:231-241). This process is explained in detail in Chapter 3.

1.10. Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted with one EAP practitioner and one OSW to determine certain trends (Stydom & Delpont, 2011:394). The participants in the pilot study were included in the study owing to the rich information they had provided to the researcher. The pilot study helped the researcher test questions in the interview

schedule and make amendments where necessary. Minor amendments were made to the interview schedule to assist in the efficiency of the data collection instrument.

1.11. Ethical Considerations: A Theoretical Foundation

According to Ranjit (2005:212) ethics are “principles of conduct that are considered correct, especially those of a given profession or group”. The researcher is of the view that these principles of conduct ensure that the profession and the participants are fully protected during the research process. Therefore, ethics are certainly vital in this research, specifically, because it focuses on people, real issues and private information.

Although the research did not deal with participants’ personal issues but rather focused on their views and experiences in the two fields respectively, it was still important that the researcher complied with the relevant codes of ethical and professional conduct. In this chapter, the researcher will cover the ethical considerations from a theoretical point of view.

The following ethical considerations were deemed relevant to the research study (Strydom, 2011:115-126):

1.11.1. Voluntary participation and Informed Consent

Voluntary participation and informed consent are two ethical considerations that are closely linked. Rubin & Babbie (2005 in Strydom, 2011:116) state that participation in a research project should always be voluntary. According to Flick (2007:69) informed consent implies that participants should know about the research in which they intend to participate and have an option to refuse to take part.

Strydom (2011:117) asserts that informed consent should reflect adequate information on the goal of the study; the expected duration of participation; the study

procedures; the advantages, disadvantages and dangers that subjects may be exposed to; as well as the researcher's credibility. According to the same source, this information ensures that subjects make voluntary and informed decisions about possible participation. Involving participants in a study without their consent causes a conflict between the researcher's goal to broaden knowledge and the responsibility to protect participants.

1.11.2. Violation of Anonymity/Privacy/Confidentiality

It is important to guarantee and maintain confidentiality of participants and their privacy should always be respected (Flick, 2007:69). According to Ranjit (2005:213) the researcher needs to be careful when handling sensitive information about participants because knowing information such as marital status, age, and income may be considered an invasion of privacy. However, when the correct scientific sampling is used, the privacy of subjects can be ensured. Proper sampling ensures that there is no bias when including or excluding subjects (Strydom, 2011:120).

The terms anonymity and confidentiality are usually confused but these two terms have different meanings. Confidentiality means that the researcher and a few other staff members or colleagues, having committed to the matter of confidentiality, will be aware of the participants' identities. Anonymity, on the other hand, implies that no-one, including the researcher, will be able to identify the participants afterwards (Babbie, 2001 in Strydom, 2011:120).

1.11.3. Compensation

An ethical issue arises when money is involved by way of compensating subjects because people might only want to participate because of this, thus compromising the purpose of the study. The main issue regarding compensation is therefore the

fact that participation in the study should not only be because of the incentive (Strydom, 2011:121-122).

1.11.4. Actions and Competence of the Researcher

It is the ethical obligation of all researchers to ensure that they are honest, proficient and fit to undertake a particular research study (William, 2006 in Strydom, 2011:123). The researcher should be mindful of his/her actions and attitudes under all circumstances and ensure that they always reflect ethically correct behaviour. Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:145) concur that the researcher's ethical obligation is to develop a well-designed research project and implement it with care. If this is disregarded, the research will yield results of minimal scientific value.

Essentially, the possible risks and advantages of the study must be evaluated and the researcher should ensure that the promises made to subjects are honoured.

1.11.5. Publication of Findings

Flick (2007:69) stresses that a leading principle should be accurate data interpretation, which means that there should be no omission or fraud in collecting or analyzing data. The information on the final report that will be introduced to the reading public should be clear enough for readers to understand. Strydom (2011:126) suggests that the final report should be conveyed unambiguously and should reflect that:

- ❖ no bias language was used regarding the identifying information of participants;
- ❖ results were not manipulated to confirm the hypothesis or provide affirmative answers the research questions; and that
- ❖ there was no plagiarism.

The above section covered the theoretical part of the ethical considerations appropriate for the undertaken research study. The application of the ethical considerations in relation to the study is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

1.12. Definition of Key Concepts

The subsequent section will define the concepts related to the literature review and the study as a whole.

1.12.1. Employee

“An employee refers to an organisation’s members or employees who are eligible for EAP services” (Standards Committee of EAPA, 2010:5).

1.12.2. Organisation

“An organisation refers to the organisation whose members or employees are eligible for EAP services” (Standards Committee of EAPA, 2010:5).

1.12.3. Service Provider

A service provider is “an [external] agency providing professional services to clients and corporate clients in accordance with a formal contract” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:2).

1.12.4. EAP Practitioner

An EAP practitioner is “a person (not necessarily professionally trained) performing EAP-specific or related tasks i.e. referral, liaison, training, marketing, evaluating” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:2).

1.12.5. EAP Professional

An EAP professional is “a professionally trained person providing an EAP service, including clinical EAP-specific or related tasks i.e. therapy, counselling” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:2).

1.12.6. Employee Assistance Programmes

EAP is “a work-site based programme to improve organisation performance through the provision of structured management and employee support services” (Hopkins, 2003:10).

1.12.7. Occupational Social Work

OSW is “a field of practice in which Social Workers attend to the human and social needs of the work community by designing and executing appropriate interventions to ensure healthier individuals and environment” (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:38).

EAP and OSW are the focus of the study and for this reason, a detailed description and comparison of the two concepts will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

1.13. Limitations of the Study

The researcher identified the following limitations in the study:

1.13.1. Geographical location

The research was initially supposed to focus on the North-West region. However, because the SAOSWA and EAPA-SA Board provided the name lists it was difficult to acquire information of SAOSWA members in the region because the association has limited branches and none in the North-West region. Also, the members of EAPA-SA in the region were limited. Therefore, the researcher attempted to generalise the results to South Africa as a whole because the participants were from the different provinces.

1.13.2. Sampling method

The research was meant to sample purposively because the researcher intended to make use of a specific criteria for participant inclusion. However, it was easier to sample randomly as the list of members of the respective Boards (EAPA-SA and SAOSWA) was made available from the Boards' data bases. The researcher randomly picked names from the list provided. Although the sample did not entirely represent the population as a probability random sample, it increased the credibility of the results.

The sample was inadvertently limited to government employees. The reason for this lied in the fact that the list of names provided by the two associations were those of government employees. This was not intentional, however, it led to limited empirical data obtained and adversely omitted the views of the EAPs and OSWs in the private sector.

Furthermore, the sampling size was relatively small and thus could not be generalised to the entire EAP and OSW population. The sample of the research study consisted of thirteen participants, six participants from EAPA-SA and seven from SAOSWA.

1.13.3. Data collection instrument

The researcher made use of email interviews to collect data. During the sample recruitment, there was a high rate of non-delivery because some people had either changed or lost their email addresses. This challenge was overcome by inviting new or additional individuals to participate from the name list supplied by EAPA-SA and SAOSWA.

1.13.4. Informed consent and confidentiality

Because the researcher used e-mail interviews to collect data, it was difficult to request that members print out, sign, scan and return the informed consent by e-mail. Apart from it being an impractical request, it would have been time consuming and some members did not have easy access to such resources. Together with the invitation to participate, the researcher attached the informed consent and confirmed that an affirmative response to the email would suffice as informed consent on their part. This helped save time and costs for the participants.

1.13.5. Interview questions

During the pilot study, which will be explained in detail later, the researcher decomposed the interview schedule into several sections and asked a certain number of questions at a time. However, this was time consuming and frustrating for the participants and they wanted to drop out of the interview as a result. The researcher then opted to send all primary interview questions in one email to allow participants to respond at their earliest convenience. The questions were however sent only after securing permission from the participants.

1.14. Outline of the Research Report

The contents of the research report are divided into five chapters as presented below.

1.14.1. Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to the Study

This chapter briefly introduces the topic and provides a brief background to the study, including the key concepts. The chapter specifically points out the problem statement and rationale as well as the important questions that the research needs

to answer. A brief description of the research approach, rationale and limitations conclude the chapter.

1.14.2. Chapter 2: A Theoretical Comparison between Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work.

This chapter provides a theoretical background on EAPs and OSW. A critical review of literature regarding the two fields is presented and linked to the title of the study. The chapter reiterates the purpose of the study. It further theoretically conceptualises each discipline in an attempt to provide a comparison. The literature review is broken down into subheadings including a historical overview of both disciplines, functions, scope of practice and types of services rendered, service delivery models and requirements for practice. This chapter forms part of the theoretical foundation of the empirical study.

1.14.3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The chapter provides and describes the research methodology undertaken in the study. The chapter presents the research design, research population, sampling, research instruments, data analysis, validity and reliability, as well as the ethical considerations that guided the research process.

1.14.4. Chapter 4: Empirical Findings on the Similarities and Differences Between EAP and OSW

This chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation of results. The data will be analysed by answering the research questions. Issues will be identified including triangulation of the reviewed literature, the results and the current reality. Findings will be linked to the literature cited in the literature review chapter.

1.14.5. Chapter 5: Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter concludes the research and the research report. A brief summary of objectives and major findings are presented, drawing logical conclusions from the interpreted data. The researcher makes realistic recommendations and suggestions for future research and concludes the report.

1.15. Summary

Through this chapter, an overview of the study is provided. The chapter outlines the problem statement, rationale and the goals and objectives of the study. It further alludes to the ecological systems theory as a foundational theory that could guide the comparison of EAPs and OSW.

The next chapter will focus on a thorough literature review regarding EAPs and OSW and will attempt to compare the two disciplines theoretically.

CHAPTER 2

A THEORETICAL COMPARISON BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES AND OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

2.1. Introduction

Are there any significant similarities or differences between EAPs and OSW? The apparent similarity between the two fields of practice is that the services are provided in a work setting. Therefore, both EAPS and OSW are aimed at helping employees cope with life tasks. Clearly there is a close link between the two; but, a theoretical and practical comparison still lacks in literature.

The goal of the study was to clarify the similarities and differences between Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work. A comparison of the two fields will reveal each one's uniqueness and reduce any confusion that may exist with regards to the two fields.

This chapter will provide an overview of previous research on EAPs and OSW. It presents a framework for the case study that covers the main focus of the research that will be described in the research report.

Therefore, this chapter will attempt to critically discuss and compare Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work under the following headings:

- Definition of EAPs and OSW
- Historical overview and reasons for establishment
- Client systems and service users

- Core technologies and functions
- Scope of practice and types of services rendered
- Service delivery and practice models
- Requirements for practice.

2.2. Definition of EAPs and OSW

The subsequent section will describe EAPs and OSW in detail and compare the two disciplines in terms of definitions.

2.2.1. Employee Assistance Programmes

Employee Assistance Programmes are “services offered by employers to their employees to help them overcome problems that may negatively affect job satisfaction or productivity” (Barker, 2003: 141)

Another definition used for EAPs is “the work organisations’ resources based on core technologies or functions to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:2).

More specifically, the Standards Committee of EAPA (2010:6) describes EAPs as workplace programmes that are designed to help organisations in addressing issues of productivity and employees in identifying and resolving personal concerns such as health, marital, family, legal, financial, drug, alcohol, stress, emotional, or other personal issues that may affect work performance.

From the above definitions one can deduct that EAPs aim at prevention and treatment of psychological and social dysfunction in employees which may in turn impact on their work negatively and may therefore reduce quality of work of officials

employed by an organisation. It is the view of the researcher that EAPs are in existence for two reasons; first to help an organisation deal with productivity issues and secondly to render assistance to employees dealing with social, emotional and psychological problems. The two reasons are, however, not addressed in isolation but jointly, as one is a direct result of another.

2.2.2. Occupational Social Work

OSW also has several definitions, however, the researcher will utilise two definitions and compare these with those of the EAP. OSW can be described as “policies and services, delivered through the auspices of employers and trade unions, to workers and those who seek entry into the workplace” (Akabas, 1995:1779).

Other authors describe it as “a form of Social Work professional practice at the workplace, which uses a workplace programme as a model” (Mogorosi, 2009:345).

Based on these two definitions, it is clear that OSW can be perfectly aligned with the context of workplace. Specifically, because the practice thereof utilises workplace resources to render services within the context of workplace organisations. The researcher believes that, as with the previous definition of EAPs, the human and social needs of employees are addressed for the reason that they have a direct influence on the wellbeing of the organisation as a whole. If employees are not taken care of, productivity and job performance decrease thus leading to the detriment of the organisation. It is for these reasons that OSW and EAPs are in existence.

It can therefore be accepted that the definitions of occupational Social Work and EAPs are not so different from each other. The purposes of these two fields are similar; however, whether they were established based on same circumstances is uncertain.

2.3. Historical overview and reasons for establishment for EAPs and OSW

The following section will attempt to contextualise EAP and OSW theoretically by discussing and comparing the two fields under particular headings, starting off with the history of EAPs and OSW.

2.3.1. Historical background and rationale for EAPs

Employee Assistance Programmes started off as Occupational Alcoholism Programmes (OAP) in the United States of America (USA). These programmes were established to assist employees who encountered alcohol-related issues such as absenteeism, decline in performance and reduced productivity as a result (Daniels, Teems, & Carrol, 2005:37). As workplace issues changed and new challenges developed, the EAP transformed to a programme that addressed all work-related problems as alcoholism was obviously not the only workplace problem.

The second origin of EAP services stems from the Hawthorne studies. A programme of employee advice and counselling was operated by lay counsellors drawn from management and aimed at promoting social and psychological functioning of employees and ensuring employee productivity (Cooper, Biron & Burke, 1997:13).

The USA model of EAP was introduced to other countries because, firstly, the USA international companies introduced EAPs to enhance performance in terms of cost-reduction, quality improvement and the need for adaptability of products and services to certain markets. Secondly, some of these companies turned to EAPs to tackle internal problematic concerns like absenteeism, presenteeism, burnout, breakdown, labour turnover, and underperformance because of personal troubles (Cooper et al., 1997:18).

Therefore, as previously indicated, the programme began to expand thus addressing personal and emotional problems, in addition to alcoholism and addiction, which affected employee job performance.

In the South African context, EAP started in the 1980s in response to the problems that migrant workers encountered by being away from home (Schoeman & Petzer, 2005:119). Additionally, the EAP was introduced in the 1980s by psychologists and Social Workers who had previously studied the programme in the USA (Manzini, 2005:31).

According to Du Plessis (1991:35-36) EAPs developed for several reasons in South Africa. Some EAPs were established to seek other ways of managing poor performance and emphasis was put on programme cost effectiveness. Other EAPs were only set up to express the notion of "internal social responsibility". South Africa National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA) societies were involved in training EAP coordinators and they assisted companies to develop substance abuse policies and EAP services as well as prevention and education programmes.

In the next section the researcher will discuss the historical overview of Occupational Social Work and the reasons for its establishment.

2.3.2. Historical and societal context of OSW

The two major contexts from which one may analyse the development of Occupational Social Work in South Africa are the welfare system, which locates occupational social work within a professional arena, and the management of people, which highlights a view of the worker in the workplace, and the acceptance

(or the lack thereof) that social services are necessary management options that may be used to support and develop workers (Du Plessis, 2001:97-98).

When looking at the history of the social work profession, three themes emerge. The first theme relays the fact that, formerly the welfare system of South Africa was shaped by the fact that African poverty and the 'poor white' problem were treated differently. Social Workers were invited to the workplace following the introduction of the civilised policy that protected the positions of skilled white people and provided work for white people in state-run-organisations. At the time, material assistance was central to service delivery but over time the focus changed to personal problems (Du Plessis, 2001:98).

The second theme involves the philosophical underpinning of the old welfare system that focused on therapeutic services. Its main goal was to change "the person with the problem". These foundations were centred on the culture and heritage of the white population, thus encouraging individualism and family independence. Curative clinical work was the norm for many years as there was no space for preventive, developmental and educational services. The focus on person-changing fit perfectly with the policies and philosophies of Apartheid as principal practice within a treatment perspective gave little chance of participating in social action (Du Plessis, 2001:99).

The third and final theme was the substantial dependence on Social Work models developed in countries in the Northern Hemisphere. These models were intended for developed, urbanised and industrialised countries. Much of the Social Work effort that was already limited by a lack of resources was ineffective owing to an unfitting

formation of services, hence the unfitting methods and models used for local conditions (Mc Kendrick, 1990 in Du Plessis, 2001:99).

The models cited in the final theme were certainly somewhat unfitting to the South Africa conditions. Nonetheless, the implementation thereof may have been necessary so as to create awareness of the shortcomings of the country. In doing so, local Social Workers had an opportunity to re-evaluate the models, then develop and implement models more suitable for the South African context.

Evidently, based on history and development, EAPs and OSW were introduced for similar reasons; to ensure the wellbeing of employees and to maintain and promote productivity in the workplace. However, the circumstances within which these individual fields were established differ to some extent. The initial establishment of EAPs in the USA was solely for substance abuse employees as this resulted in absenteeism, presenteeism and in turn affected employee effectiveness in the workplace. It was then recognized that for productivity to be kept at a maximum, the social and psychological functioning of employees needed to be taken into account. The EAPs further evolved following the realisation that substance abuse was not the only problem that affected employees in the first place, and so, the programmes began to address a wider range of personal and workplace issues experienced by workers.

OSW, on the other hand, was developed from the welfare system and management of people. This field subscribes to the values of social work (service, social justice, dignity and worth of the individual, importance and centrality of human relationships, integrity and competence) as well as the welfare system that provides assistance to the needy (employees). Therefore, the emphasis is on managing the 'needy' worker

through provision of quality social services and according to the values of the profession thus in turn promoting productivity.

In essence, the two fields were established differently because their primary focus during development was not the same. EAPs were established because productivity went down as a result of employee personal or work-related issues. Therefore, the primary goal was to manage poor performing employees which sequentially meant dealing with the challenges that employees faced resulting in a return on investment. OSW, was established because social services were necessary in the workplace to support and develop workers which in turn guaranteed productivity. It is the view of the researcher, based on the reviewed literature, that OSW focuses more strongly on a healthy workforce, whereas EAP focuses on the promotion and maintenance of productivity as a priority.

The next section will compare the EAP and OSW client systems and service users respectively.

2.4. EAP and OSW client systems and service users

Thus far, the researcher has established that both fields are directed at employed persons. However, every organisation has its own unique structure. To get a clear understanding of the service recipients within the work environment for the respective fields, this section will commence firstly by outlining EAP service users and then the OSW client systems.

2.4.1. EAP service users

EAPs consist of four major types of services. These include services which are directed to individuals, managers, supervisors and organisations (Attridge, Amaral,

Bjornson, Herlihy, Mc Pherson, Routledge, Sharar, Stephenson, & Teems, 2009:1-2).

❖ *Services for individuals*

The most commonly provided EAP services are those rendered to employees at the organisation and their covered family members. Some of these services include providing brief solution-focused therapy, conducting clinical case assessments, making referrals and collaborating with other areas. The most common single types are individual assessments and referral with brief therapy (Attridge et al., 2009:1).

❖ *Services to managers*

EAP services may be offered to managers and supervisors at the organisation. Examples of such services include supervisor training and education, guidance on appropriate support for employees, management consulting and skills development, dealing with group and work-team dynamics, and referral procedures to the EAP (Attridge et al., 2009:2).

❖ *Services to organisations*

At organisational level, EAP services are provided either to the entire company or smaller business units within the organisation. Some of these services include leading group interventions and support groups, advance planning and immediate response services for critical incidents (violence, natural disasters), supporting other internal areas with planning and implementing changes and companywide educational programmes. Other organisational roles for EAPs involve benefit programmes and services like health and wellness work life, drug-free workplace training and mandatory referrals, disability management and risk management (Attridge et al., 2009:2).

2.4.2. OSW client systems

OSW, in contrast, attends to diverse populations in the work setting; this includes women, racial and ethnic minorities. Occupational Social Workers render services to clients that represent both ends of the economic scale, especially at risk populations such as single parents, old retired workers, disabled persons, persons living with HIV/AIDS as well as the families of each of these groups. The main difference between OSW and social work in other settings is that the clients of OSW are employed. The most important critical role in this setting is helping clients retain employment (Maiden, 2001:129).

Kruger and Van Breda (2001:948-949) augment this by indicating three client systems that exist in OSW, including the employee as person, person as employee and the organisation as client. The employee as person implies that the employee is served in his role outside of work, i.e. as a brother, father, son, or community member. Therefore in this instance the problems that are dealt with are personal and not work-related. Secondly, the person as employee relates to the individual's role at work, his needs and issues that are related to work which may impact negatively on his performance if not fulfilled. The final identified client system is that of the organisation as client. In this instance, change is directed at the organisation as client as opposed to the employee, the workplace and its structures, community channels, management staff, policies and procedures and organisational culture.

The Social Services Professions Act 110 of 1978, Section 28(1) (gA): Regulations relating to the registration of a speciality in Occupational Social Work further indicates that client systems refer to the following systems to which OSW services are directed: (a) the employee as part of the work system and family system; (b) the

employing organisation; and (c) communities with which employing organisation has operational or geographical links.

The client systems and services users for EAPs and OSW are similar; they both render services to employees and their families as well as the organisation at large. Evidently, this information about the two fields and their respective clients supports the transition from micro to macro practice where services are rendered to individuals and their families as well as the organisation as a whole.

The ecological model may be used as a metaphor in the transition to macro practice. The ecological systems theory puts emphasis on the need to view “people and the environment as a unitary system within a particular cultural and historic context” (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2006:10). Ultimately it is within such interactions, between individuals and the environment that problems usually arise.

Information on client systems gives the spectrum of the types of services that are provided to employees within the field of EAP as well as OSW. The next session will compare the two fields in terms of the core technologies and workplace functions.

2.5. Core technologies and functions of EAPs and OSW

EAPs improve employee and workplace effectiveness and are important in maintaining and improving the health and productivity of employees, staff retention and returning employees to work after injury or illness through prevention, identification and intervention (Phillips, 2004:64).

2.5.1. EAP Workplace Functions

EAPs serve the following functions in the workplace:

- ❖ *Early identification of troubled employees*

An ideal EAP will provide for early identification of troubled employees. This function of the EAP is important as it allows problems to be dealt with as soon as possible. Early identification is beneficial because the assessment is thorough and the chances of successful intervention are high. Troubled employees may be identified by monitoring job performance (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:133). Job performance may be monitored in terms of absenteeism, sickness, poor work attendance and tardiness.

❖ *Assessment*

Assessment is another important function of the EAP. The assessment in EAP aims to identify, document and evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, problems and needs of employees (Blair & Harper, 2002:28). This function allows the EAP practice to lay the groundwork and essentially guides the intervention.

❖ *Treatment*

Available treatment methods in EAP include medical treatment, counselling, therapy and debriefing (Romano, 1995:95). As such, the EAP staff of an organisation should be recognised as professionally trained in areas like mental health, social work, community nursing and psychiatry and should have appropriate credentials (Ekenberg, 1995:17).

❖ *Referral*

Referring employees to appropriate resources is important. This function is highly reliant on good assessment as one needs to have a clear understanding of the problem in order to make an appropriate referral. According to EAPA-SA (2005:17) referrals should be based on the individual needs of the employee as disclosed through assessment and supported by monitoring, observation and documentation.

❖ *Follow-up*

The goal of follow-up is to ensure the continued well-being of employees and their dependants as well as the organisation. Follow up should be done on all cases and should facilitate rapid contact between the employee and the resources in order to support and maintain recovery.

According to the Standards Committee of EAPA (2010:6) EAP core technologies epitomise the crucial components of the Employee Assistance Profession. These components are combined to create a unique approach to addressing productivity issues within the work organisation and employee personal problems that affect job performance. Therefore, in addition to the workplace functions, the following can be regarded as the EAP core technologies or functions (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2015:1-2).

❖ *Training and development*

The training and development of an organisation's stakeholders (managers, supervisors and unions) that seek to manage the troubled employee job performance.

❖ *Marketing*

The promotion of EAP services including availability and guarantees to managers, supervisors, unions, employees and family members.

❖ *Case Management*

Includes confidential and timely risk identification, assessment, motivation, short-term intervention, referral, monitoring, follow-up, reintegration and aftercare services for employees with personal/work-related problems that affect job performance.

❖ *Consultation with work organisation*

Proactively addresses inherent trends resulting from personal or organisational issues.

❖ *Stakeholder management*

To establish and maintain effective relations with internal and external role players and service providers.

❖ *Monitoring and evaluation*

Monitoring and evaluation of the value, success, and/or impact of EAP services relating to the work organisation and individual job performance.

There is a clear link between the EAP workplace functions and the EAP core technologies. The researcher is of the view that the workplace functions are somewhat embodied in the core technologies, specifically as subsections. For instance, case management as a core technology, embodies certain aspects of the EAP workplace functions such as early identification, assessment, intervention and follow-up. Therefore, this indicates clearly the link between case management and the EAP workplace functions.

2.5.2. OSW work-programme functions

Iversen (1998:559) and Akabas (1995) as cited in Mogorosi (2009:344) classify the following as OSW work-programme functions:

- ❖ *Consultation*: takes place within the organisation between relevant stakeholders (management, unions and employees) regarding the needs of individual employees and certain policy situations.
- ❖ *Assessment*: assessment of meaning of work, work goal, sources of information, discrimination, physical ability and educational attainment.

- ❖ *Client intervention*: using brief counselling in relation to issues of co-worker relations, substance abuse, mental health and referral to community-based service providing agencies.
- ❖ *Advocacy*: collaboration with corporate OSW, and collection of employment data.
- ❖ *Programme development*: establishing career enrichment and school-to-work programme; initiating mentorship training, and forming business collaboratives.
- ❖ *Social Activism*: organising support of policies at national and state level for workplace practices and wages; collecting programme and individual data and lobbying for job creation.

According to Du Plessis (2001:103) social workers render services instead of fixed products, as a result, the content of their work is bound to change based on employee and organisational needs. As society constantly transforms, priorities of practice become affected by outside factors. Where some services are described by the method used such as case work, group work or resource development, others are described in terms of issues that they address like alcohol abuse and safety. Finally, there is also the aspect of client groups that are serviced such as women, single parents and employees going through divorce. The combined and varied methods, issues, client groups as well as roles provide a sense of richness and diversity in the way workplace needs may be addressed.

There appears to be some similarities in terms of the workplace functions performed by EAP practitioners/professionals and Occupational Social Workers. Some of these similarities outlined in the text include case management and consultation with the work organisation. The functions of the two fields may also be expressed in terms of

the ecosystems theory as services are provided to the employees as well as the environment within which they operate.

Similarly, this theory outlines a couple of differences between OSW and EAP workplace functions. These differences are evident in some of the EAP's core technologies such as training and development, marketing, and monitoring and evaluation. This is not to say that these aspects are not of importance or even non-existent in OSW, however, their feature in the EAP's core technologies indicate that they are the driving force in the field. Monitoring and evaluation, specifically as a function, rationalises the use of EAPs in the workplace and ensures that there is a return on investment in the EAP context. This is done by looking at the successful implementation of the other five core technologies.

OSW, conversely, is far more passionate about the wellbeing of the individual employee and ensuring fairness in the workplace through advocacy and social activism. OSW is concerned with developing employees and enriching their careers so that they thrive in their work environments, thus resulting in increased productivity. Subsequently, although the two fields work towards increased productivity in the workplace, the ways in which this is done differs in some measure.

The scope of practice and the types of services provided by EAPs and OSW will be discussed next.

2.6. Scope of practice and type of services

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will attempt to describe the scope of practice and the type of services that are rendered by EAPs and OSW so as to give a comparative analysis of the differences and similarities in terms of the way services are rendered within the two fields.

2.6.1. EAP scope of practice

The Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:4-26) identifies the following guidelines for EAPs:

2.6.1.1. Programme design

In designing a programme, the following should be considered:

- ❖ The programme design should be centred on the needs of the organisation and its employees (organisational profile).
- ❖ A policy must be established that describes the EAP in its entirety.
- ❖ An advisory committee that involves representatives from all segments of the workforce should be established.
- ❖ Consideration should be given to different service delivery and costing models to ensure that financial resources are applied effectively.

2.6.1.2. Implementation

The implementation aspect involves operational guidelines that should be put in place to operationalise the policy as well as an implementation plan that outlines actions and a required schedule for an operationally effective EAP.

2.6.1.3. Management and administration

This includes staffing that ensures that the number of EAP professionals and their qualifications match the organisation's and the programme needs. EAP professionals/practitioners should be subject to ongoing consultation and/or supervision and must be engaged in professional development activities. The EAP professional must have enough professional liability insurance and must maintain the highest level of ethical conduct. The EAP must further keep record and promote confidentiality and professionalism.

2.6.1.4. *Clinical services*

These services include critical incident management, crisis intervention, case management, referral, brief therapy, case monitoring, aftercare and reintegration.

2.6.1.5. *Non-clinical services*

These include organisational consultation to help management address organisational issues that could affect employee wellbeing and organisational effectiveness, EAP management and supervisory training to enhance employee and organisational resilience, as well as marketing to ensure visibility of the programme.

2.6.1.6. *Proactive services*

These services exist to ensure that programme are in place to alleviate employee behavioural and organisational risks.

2.6.1.7. *Stakeholder management*

This includes networking with different internal and external stakeholders to ensure partnerships and enhance the knowledge and skills of EAP professionals.

2.6.1.8. *Monitoring and evaluation*

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the EAP will ensure that the EAP adds value to the organisation and beneficiaries.

From an international context, the Standards are categorised differently by the Standards Committee of UK-EAPA (2015:6-19):

❖ *Purchasers*

Purchasers in this context are used to refer to the organisation that is purchasing the EAP services. Under this category, the following should be considered, similarly to the programme design in the South African context:

- An EAP must complete a needs assessment so as to understand the purchasers' needs based on recent information.

- The EAP should be integrated at all levels of the organisation.
- An implementation plan should be provided to each EAP purchaser that contains actions and responsibilities of persons involved and timescales necessary to put EAP in place; monitoring arrangements, marketing arrangements as well as an emphasis on the matter of confidentiality.
- Management information reports should be offered to the purchaser.
- A published complaints procedure should be made available.
- A partnership approach should be offered to the purchaser by the EAP.

❖ *Information control*

This includes record keeping and confidentiality. All records of services should be kept and should be consistent with the EAP service delivery system, policies of the purchaser and service provider and all applicable legal requirements. Also, a clear confidentiality statement must be established and adhered to by all EAP professionals/practitioners.

❖ *EAP business operations*

These operations refer to services that should be delivered through unique and separate business functions as well as an adequate number of professionals that must be provided in order to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the EAP.

❖ *EAP Network*

This category refers to the management of affiliates in terms of robust recruitment, due diligence and audit processes which ensure that high quality services are provided by qualified professionals; EAP case management provided to affiliates; and EAP case risk management that includes a clearly defined clinical risk protocol process.

❖ *EAP operations*

These include problem identification and initial assessment, EAP referral, crisis intervention, short-term problem resolution, monitoring and follow-up of services outside the EAP, EAP consultancy services to managers, management referral, as well as evaluation.

Although conceptualised differently, the aim of Standards remains the same across all borders, South Africa and beyond. They aim to support the achievement of effective, safe and appropriate quality services. The Standards, thus, complement each other.

The Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:1) describes a Standard as “the agreed level of best professional practice, or a description of an ideal situation”. This description implies that adhering to the EAP Standards will ensure that the EAP programmes implemented are practical and sustainable. Still, this is not to say that an organisation’s uniqueness should not be considered. The Standards document gives a variety of ways in which the Standards may be implemented and this suggests that they should be appropriately applied in line with the organisation’s uniqueness.

2.6.2. OSW scope of practice and types of service

Maiden (2001:126-127) describes three categories of OSW:

2.6.2.1. Policy, planning and administration

This category does not involve any direct counselling. However, it includes coordination of EAPs, training formulation of policies for career advancement, functions within corporate social responsibility departments and administration of affirmative action programmes.

2.6.2.2. *Direct practice with individuals, families and special populations*

These services include crisis intervention, assessing personal problems and referral for alcohol treatment, drug and mental health problems, brief counselling for personal problems, child and elder care in companies/union programmes, relocation services and retirement counselling.

2.6.2.3. *Practice that combines direct service and administration/ policy formulation*

OSW practice focuses on employees, their dependants and the organisation. Although it is not the only profession that has entered the workplace, the qualifications of the social work professional are appropriate for effective practice in the workplace.

The focus on person-in-environment is basic to assisting the individual at work. OSW thus includes a variety of skills and services that are offered in other settings; however, it is unique because the organisational structure and culture impacts service delivery. OSW occurs in unions, hospitals, corporations, schools, government and military units, among other settings.

According to the Regulations that relate to registering a speciality in OSW (Social Services Professions ACT 110 of 1978, Section 28(1) (gA), OSW focuses on the following:

- ❖ It is a systemic approach as equal attention is given to employees, the organisation, and the broader environment in planning for any micro, mezzo or macro level intervention.
- ❖ A binocular vision that views individual employees, the organisation and the broader community as client systems with a reciprocal relationship and impacts on one another.
- ❖ OSW services relate to the following:

- Work-focused assessments that assess the needs and issues of different client systems in the workplace and the relationship between them.
- Work-focused interventions directed at the individual employee, the organisation or the broader community.
- Work-focused policy and programme development.
- Concurrent multilevel practice.
- Work-family interventions to promote wellness within family thus positively impacting at work.

OSW and EAP are similar in their scope of practice as they fulfil a generalist role-providing services to individuals and their families, consultation with management and supervisors, assistance with organisational development training of staff and programme administration and policy analysis. As noted earlier, both fields are in support of the transition from micro to macro. Furthermore, both fields are defined by the setting in which services are rendered-workplace, and the circumstances under which they are offered. The difference between the two lies in the fact that OSW as a field of practice integrates traditional social work skills and abilities whereas EAP, with the diverse professions, integrates a broader variety of skills and abilities from multiple professions such as psychology, psychiatry and nursing.

Accordingly, it is the opinion of the researcher, based on the theory outlined, that it is easier for an Occupational Social Worker to perform EAP functions than it is for an EAP to perform OSW functions owing to the fact that EAP is every so often viewed as a sub-section of OSW. The EAP practitioner may not necessarily be able to perform all OSW functions because it incorporates various professionals from diverse fields such as psychology, psychiatry and nursing.

The following section looks at the EAP service delivery models and the OSW practice models and compares the two in terms of their similarities and differences.

2.7. Service delivery and practice models

In order to gain an understanding of the similarities and differences in terms of the models utilised in practice and the effectiveness thereof, EAP and OSW service delivery and practice models will be discussed in that order.

2.7.1. EAP service delivery models

EAP service delivery model is a structured plan that explains how services will be offered. Mthethwa (2000:40) affirms this by referring to an EAP model as a “framework from which the company will operate in order to provide a service to the troubled employee”. The existence of such a framework brings about effective and successful implementation of programmes.

The Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015) stipulates standards that are presented as guidelines for EAPs. These standards should take into account the status of the programme and be adopted without the fundamental principles being compromised. The published document aims to offer a point of reference for employee assistance practice, to promote the formation of quality of the EAPs, to give a description of EAP services, to operationalise programme standards and guidelines, to inform and educate the work organisation about employee assistance services, to serve as a guide for the membership of EAPA-SA and other related professionals, and to improve the quality of existing EAPs (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2015:1).

Organisations should have service delivery models that reflect procedures in detail. Gould and Smith (1988:10) assert that “not all EAP models are equally viable for any

particular organisation. It is likely that whatever model emerges is the result of a dynamic combination of an organisation's size, complexity and resources as well as management philosophy, community resources and organisational history (especially the extent and nature of 'people problems') among the workforce and the legacy of particularly noteworthy responses to some of the responses".

The most recognised and utilised EAP models have been identified as internal, external and combination models. The models will be discussed next:

❖ *Internal model*

When using the internal model, also known as the in-house model, diagnostic and treatment services are offered within the organisation. In this type of model EAP professionals/practitioners are fully employed by the organisation and the organisation maintains full service facility (Dessler, 1997:524). According to Masi (1992:6) the organisation employs the EAP staff in its entirety and categorises their functions into staff components of a unit. Therefore, the unit manager supervises unit staff, develops EAP policies and designs procedures that need to be followed when implementing policies.

This model allows employees to either refer themselves or be referred to the EAP. The office is thus accessible and travelling costs and loss of time is minimal. The functions of the counsellor include performing case monitoring, aftercare, job re-entry of employees and assisting managers in planning organisational functions. Bruce (1990) asserts that confidentiality and anonymity are primary disadvantages of the in-house model.

❖ *External model*

In the external model, the employer enters into a contractual agreement with an external EAP service provider for EAP services and the facility is provided by the employer or the service provider (Dessler, 1997:524). Masi (1992:6) indicates that the model is easier to implement and provides better accountability and lower liability. Employees may feel more comfortable discussing their problems with someone from outside the company as their confidentiality is guaranteed.

Although one model cannot be deemed to be better than the other, a closer look at each one's advantages and disadvantages may help an organisation to decide between them. The commonalities between the models are found in the clientele as both models provide services to employees and their families as well as the organisation. However, given the EAP's limited sessions the practitioner should be aware of community resources, healthcare systems and community educational support services to assist in addressing some of the complex issues presented by employees.

❖ *Combination model*

This model combines the internal and external model. Because external EAPs usually have a structured limit to services rendered (e.g. limited sessions) and the internal EAP is likely to be involved in complex situations between employees, this may validate the establishment of the combination model. A maximum number of clinical services are usually provided by affiliate counsellors who work for an outside vendor but also co-ordinate activities through the EAP staff.

2.7.2. OSW practice model

Core to OSW is a continuum of practice from clinical (micro) to organisational (macro) interventions. According to Maiden (2001:128) Ozawa (1980) and Googins (1987), developed models conceptualised the OSW continuum. The four stage model proposed by Ozawa analyses social work services in the workplace and includes (a) single service orientation, (b) comprehensive services, (c) organisational intervention, (d) and community building. The stages were said to be progressive in their scope and impact within the workplace. Googins, on the other hand, proposed a five stage model which suggested that the OSW practice is more complex now that it has become entrenched and institutionalised in the work environment. The five stage model includes welfare capitalism, personal problem orientation, service models, prevention models and organisational change at full maturity.

A recent OSW practice model, labelled the Core Practice Model of OSW practice (OSWPM), was developed in the South African National Defence Force and published by Kruger and Van Breda in 2001. Originally, the model was developed to help social workers expand their views beyond just micro practice (Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:321). The model centres on the ecosystems theory that includes both individual and the work environment. This notion is affirmed by the authors' understanding of OSW as "a specialised field of social work practice which addresses the human and social needs of the work community through a variety of interventions which aim to foster optimal adaptation between individuals and their environment" (Straussner, 1990:2).

The Core Practice Model of OSW presents the term 'position' which indicates a transition from the terms 'stage' and 'phase' used by evolutionary models. The term 'position' is used to describe a move from micro to macro, whereas, the two terms

'stage' and 'phase' are believed to separate micro and macro practices and consequently imply that micro practice is underdeveloped or even inappropriate. The term 'position', however, is viewed as more flexible as it did not favour one approach over the other (Kruger & Van Breda, 2001 in Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:322).

Additionally the model presents 'binocular vision', a metaphor for the social work practice using person-in-environment (Kruger & Van Breda, 2001 in Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:322). The person-in-environment is currently gradually more associated with the ecological perspective. Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009:322) describe the term 'binocular vision' with specific reference to loyalty towards employees, their families as well as management. It recognises the tensions that exist between micro and macro practice. The term stresses a practitioner's ability to have a microscopic view that focuses on issues close up, and a telescopic view that enables the social worker to see the broader picture.

Patently, the two principles that guide the OSWPM are firstly the idea of a position that emphasises an integrated and all-inclusive practice, and secondly, the idea of binocular vision that encourages fairness and non-prejudice towards both employees and management. The model presents four positions from which OSW can practice (Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:323-326):

❖ *Position one: Restorative interventions*

The first position of the OSWPM is considered the most traditional form of social work practice owing to its focus on clients' personal needs at micro, mezzo, and macro level. Restorative interventions render problem solving services to clients. The term restorative puts forward the fact that the client has strengths and abilities and

the social worker should therefore work with the client to uncover and restore those qualities (Kruger & Van Breda, 2001 in Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:324).

Du Plessis (in Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:324) asserts that this position emphasises serving the employee in his role outside work, for instance employee as a brother, son, father, daughter, mother or community member. Restorative interventions attend to employees and their places of abode. Therefore this position is clinical but also includes work with groups and communities.

In a study conducted by Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009:292) regarding what occupational social workers do, most restorative interventions focused on a micro level of practice and therapeutic group work was not commonly used. The reason for this may possibly be because employees saw group work as an exposing process and preferred the anonymity of individual therapy and/or external referrals; or perhaps it may be difficult to pull a group of employees out of a work setting at once.

❖ *Position two: Promotive intervention*

According to Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009:324) position two focuses on promoting and enhancing the social functioning and wellbeing of clients. "The main emphasis is on preventive, education and development" (Kruger & Van Breda, 2001:949). The term promotive suggests that the model is committed to promoting optimal functioning in clients. The first two positions mutually focus on the employee as a person and they address clients at micro, mezzo and macro level. However, the main difference between the two lies in the fact that the first position focuses on clients with an identified problem, whereas the latter attends to clients who have a need for more growth and development (Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:324).

The study conducted by Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009:293) proved that promotive interventions are typically implemented at mezzo level. Numerous community needs related to the needs of employees as persons are addressed through promotive interventions.

❖ *Position three: Work-person interventions*

Position three of the practice model includes a major shift from employee-as-person to person-as-employee. The work roles in which employees function, become the focus of concern. According to Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009:325) this position highlights the microscopic lens of the binocular vision as emphasis is placed on employees in their work roles as opposed to their workplace. Work-person interventions are committed to facilitating the interface between employees and their workplace as the notion of binocularity always stresses the employee-in-the-workplace. Nonetheless, the focus of change is likely to be individual, families or a small group.

In the third position, the client systems also include families and to some extent communities outside the workplace. Although the first two positions could be run by occupational social workers outside the organisation, Kruger and Van Breda (2001) believe that the other two positions are better implemented from within the organisation. The reason being that this position entails that the social worker have organisational credibility and understanding of the workplace and this is best achieved by being a permanent member of an organisation (Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:325).

Various interventions are run at mezzo level for the purpose of the work-related needs of employees and their families. The study conducted by Van Breda and Du

Plessis (2009) indicated that most reported work-person interventions include training or programmes meant to develop resilience in employees and their families to allow them to cope with the demands of the organisation, team building, mediation, presenting and interpreting policies to employees (Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:294).

❖ *Position four: Workplace interventions*

The final position of the practice model highlights the telescopic lens of the binocular vision. The position focuses on the workplace itself and defines it as the client (Googins & Davidson, 1993 in Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009:326). The focus of change shifts from employees to the workplace, its structures, communication channels, management staff, organisational culture, people management practices and policies and procedures.

In workplace interventions the social worker focuses on the “impersonal structure of the workplace, within which employees function. While there may be a complete turnover of employees in a particular workplace, its structure may remain the same. The employees are seen as part of the organisational structure at this point in time” (Kruger & Van Breda, 2001:950). Thus, the interventions aim at transforming the social environments within which people work.

Occupational social workers in Van Breda and Du Plessis’ study (2009:296) indicate that the interventions in this position provide inputs to the organisation for newer revised policies and strategies, therefore fulfilling the role of change agents. Other roles in this position include participation in supervisory/management training programmes and consultation with management regarding organisational challenges or implementation of processes for organisational development.

Clearly, macro practice involves a great deal of change in the organisation and this change occurs when all stakeholders in the workplace fully participate. At macro level, the problem arises when both employees and employers are challenged to change preceding ways of doing things and look at substituting these with new different ways. These challenges may be overcome by clarifying the value of macro practice to employees and employers. This can be achieved through management training on services offered by occupational social workers and the benefits of such services. The idea of change is likely to be supported only if the employer and employee both understand the nature and value of macro practice.

A comparison between the EAP service delivery models and the OSW Practice model may seem peculiar. However, the researcher is of the view that the two may be compared as they both provide the context within which services are rendered respectively. The EAP service delivery models structurally outline how services will be provided to the 'troubled employees'. This framework ensures that the EAP intervention is effective and successful. The OSWPM points to the broad scope of the field. The model defines the OSW client systems, services offered as well as intervention methods to be utilised in each position. It further looks at the employee in relation to his/her environment and how change in one directly impacts on the other.

Irrespective of the apparent differences between the OSWPM and the EAP service delivery models, the OSWPM perfectly outlines the services that both OSWs and EAPs render. The restorative interventions described in the model address the problems employees may be faced with, in EAP this is done through the provision of solution-focused therapy, assessments and making referrals. Promotive interventions focus on enhancing quality of life of the employees, this may also be

done through work-life balance and prevention programmes in EAP. Work-person interventions help employees relate better to the workplace and helps them fit better with the organisational needs. The similarity between the two fields in relation to these interventions lies in the fact that they seek to assist employees thrive and to become resilient to workplace stressors. As a final point, workplace interventions are focused on the organisation's relationship to the employees and assist the organisation to fit better with employee needs. The EAP also renders proactive programmes that seek to create a healthy working environment and contribute to increased productivity and efficiency in employees. Looking at the scope of practice and the functions of EAPs described previously enabled the researcher to rate the similarities between EAP and OSW by using the OSWPM.

Every profession generally has specific requirements for practice. In the context of EAPs and OSW, these requirements will be discussed next in order to explore the respective differences and similarities.

2.8. Requirements for Practice

The following section will look into the requirements for practice for both EAPs and OSW.

2.8.1. Requirements for practice in EAP

According to Miller (2018), EAP counsellors are usually trained in mental health and substance abuse with master's degrees, specific skills and appropriate experience. The requirements will be discussed under the following headings: education and EAP registration.

❖ *Education*

EAP counsellors generally have a master's degree in the mental health field, for instance social workers and/or counsellors (Miller, 2018). However, in the South African context this is not always the case because not all EAP staff belong to a specific profession. According to the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:3) all EAP staff are practitioners, however only those that have proof of statutory registration may be referred to as professionals. This notion implies that although all professionals may be referred to as practitioners, not all practitioners may be referred to as professionals. An EAP professional is professionally trained and provides EAP services including clinical EAP-specific or related tasks e.g. counselling and therapy. These services can only be rendered by psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, and/or professional counsellors. EAP practitioners, on the other hand, are not necessarily trained but still perform EAP-related tasks such as referral, liaison, marketing, and training.

❖ *EAP registration*

Certification in Employee Assistance Programmes (CEAP) is the only professional EAP credential. This credential serves as evidence to the public, clients and employers that the professional has the necessary education, experience and training standards set by EAPA.

According to the Employee Assistance Programme Association of South Africa (2016) the following aspects are required for registration as a member:

- Proof of employment in the field of EAP and/or wellness
- Proof of successful completion of a short course in EAP
- Proof of registration with a statutory body

- Proof of chapter involvement (attendance of at least two meetings).

Currently, there is no statutory body or any legislation available in South Africa that governs the field of EAP. Registration with a professional body as outlined above implies that each professional should be registered with their own statutory body respectively, for instance social workers' registration with the South African Council of Social Services Professions (SACSSP).

❖ *Professional designation as accepted by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)*

In 2013, SAQA recognised EAPA-SA as a Professional Association, and intrinsically the professional designation for the National Learner Records Database (NLRD) was registered. This acknowledgement has given EAPA-SA, in its guardianship role, more credibility and heightened the Employee Assistance Profession in South Africa (EAPA-SA, 2018). Initially, the two designations that were registered were EAP practitioner and EAP professional. Far along, two more categories were registered in addition to the original designations. The categories included EAP specialist and EAP coordinator.

In the EAPA-SA Guide for Professional Designation, the Board of EAPA-SA (2013:4-6) distinguishes between the following designations:

I. Employee Assistance Practitioner

A person in this category meets the minimum requirements to perform Employee Assistance (EA) specific duties. The criteria to be met by the candidate in order to be certified as a practitioner includes a 3 year B-degree in Behavioural/Social Sciences, Higher Diploma in Occupational nursing, B-Tech Occupational Health, B Cur,

Degree in Human Resources; 2 years minimum experience in the EA field and full payment of membership with EAPA-SA.

II. Employee Assistance Professional

This category applies to a person who meets the minimum requirements to perform EA specific tasks including therapeutic services. The educational qualifications include a Masters or PHD degree which is not limited to Social/Behavioural sciences or equivalent. It is an advanced grade into the profession as it is marked by at least 5 year's work experience in the EA field. Registration with an appropriate statutory council (SACSSP, HPCSA or SANC) is required. An added advantage would be certification by other accredited councils or professional boards. Full payment of membership to EAPA-SA is required.

In order to be certified as an EA Practitioner/Professional, one may need to make a written application to the EAPA-SA Board and attach the relevant documents.

III. Employee Assistance Non-Professional Designation

This category is not common and is it not included in the SAQA database. However, the Board of EAPA-SA makes provision for such a category in the EAPA-SA Guide for Professional Designation. It is said to involve members who are registered with EAPA-SA but who do not belong to the above designations, nor are they registered with any statutory councils. In practice, these members are referred to as EAP coordinators and they possess other qualifications outside EAP-related qualifications, for instance Human Resources. They are however encouraged to enroll for EAP relevant studies for certification. This category's members are expected to obtain a relevant qualification within a minimum period of 3-5 years in order to achieve one of the two designations listed above.

Recently SAQA has made provision for and accepted four categories of registration in addition to the EAP practitioner and EAP Professional. These newly founded categories include EAP Specialist and EAP Coordinator. The designations for the EAP Specialist and the EAP Coordinator were only recently registered and are still in the process of been captured, as stipulated in the SAQA Professional Bodies and Professional Designations database. The Board of EAPA-SA created a designation pathway by ensuring that the criteria for awarding the professional designation complied with the SAQA policy and criteria for recognising a professional body and registering a professional designation for the purposes of the National Qualifications Framework Act, Act 67 of 2008 and ensuring that the designations complement those that were previously registered.

According to SAQA [sa], when EAPA-SA applied for the registration of additional professional designation for professional bodies already recognised by SAQA, it recommended the following regarding the new registered designations:

I. Employee Assistance Coordinator

In this category, members must have an underlying NQF Level 6 qualification in any of the subject areas of Health, Social and Business Sciences or equivalent and at least 2 years' demonstrable work experience in the EA field.

II. Employee Assistance Specialist

In this category, members must have an underlying qualification at NQF Level 9/10; the qualification must be related to the EA professionals discipline and could be located in any of the subject areas of Health, Social and Business Sciences. The member must have at least 5 years' demonstrable management experience within

an EA environment. The EAPA-SA Board may also subject applicants to an interview prior to awarding designation of EA Specialist.

The researcher is of the view that the above listed designations give light to the flexibility within the EAP field. The varied professions and experiences of the non-professionals contribute to the discipline. The multidisciplinary teamwork ensures that clients are offered the best possible treatment currently available. This also improves communication and coordination between professionals/practitioners and clients. Thus, it may be viewed as an effective framework for maintaining uniformity of service delivery across the field.

2.8.2. OSW requirements for practice

According to the Social Services Act 110 of 1978, Section 28 (1) (gA): Regulation relating to the registration of a speciality in occupational social work, 2010, the SACSSP shall on application register a speciality in OSW where a social worker has:

- ❖ a recognised social work qualification and is registered with the SACSSP as a social worker, and
- ❖ an appropriate master's degree approved by the Council related to OSW, plus at least two years' appropriate experience within the OSW scope of services; or
- ❖ an appropriate post-graduate diploma or certificate in OSW approved by the Council, plus at least three years' appropriate practical experience within the scope of OSW services; or
- ❖ five years appropriate experience within the scope of OSW services; provided that the applicant demonstrates expertise in OSW by meeting the assessment criteria of the Council for the purpose of determining whether the social worker concerned is competent to practice OSW.

A social worker who has complied with the requirements in the above regulation may in terms of section 17 of the Act practice the profession of social work in respect of a speciality in OSW subject to the following:

- ❖ The social worker must pay a registration fee relating to the speciality and the annual fee for speciality payable each year; and
- ❖ In the case of a social worker applying for registration of a speciality in terms of regulation 2 (d) an assessment fee must be paid.

The General Provisions of the Act include the following:

- ❖ A registered social worker in a speciality of OSW may affix the designation “specialist in OSW” (SIOSW) after his/her name.
- ❖ No person may refer to him-or-herself as an occupational social worker without having registered with the Council as a speciality in OSW
- ❖ A registered social worker in the speciality of OSW must display conspicuously in his/her office the registration certificate issued to him/her in terms of the Act
- ❖ A social worker who has registered a speciality in OSW is not excluded from practicing social work in a generic context
- ❖ A social worker who does not have practical experience in the field of OSW and wishes to obtain registration as a specialist, may obtain such experience under the supervision of a registered occupational social worker.

It is clear, in terms of practice requirements that the multi-disciplinary team that exists within the field of EAP in terms of the different professions coming together has some benefits. The team of professionals from different disciplines tends to

contribute to broader perspectives and generally share ideas. OSW, on the other hand, relies solely on the discipline of social work. It is guided by social work values, principles, and code of ethics. The requirements for registration of speciality also appear stricter than that of the EAP.

2.9. Summary

In conclusion, there is a clear relationship between EAP and OSW. The two fields have evolved over the years and may be regarded as specialities in their own right. EAPs and OSW are guided by their mutual belief that organisations employ people in totality, meaning that employees do not leave their problems at home. This is the justification for the services provided to employees and their families that in turn ensure that job performance and productivity is kept at an optimum level.

The afore-mentioned notion indicates the significant role played by the ecological systems theory in the EAP and OSW field of practice. Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2006:10) explain that the theory views “people and the environment as a unitary system within a particular cultural and historic context”. The services, roles and functions of EAPs and OSW can be better understood in terms of the interrelationship between the client (employee) and the environment. In addition, the gradual transition from micro to macro practice also confirms the significance of person-in-environment.

Clearly, both fields recognise the interrelationship between personal problems and job performance. They both acknowledge the range of employee problems; however, EAPs focus more on the deteriorating work performance as the legitimate basis for intervention and treatment. The general thrust of the EAP is to deal with any

employee problem that has the potential to have a negative effect on job performance and productivity.

According to Maiden (2001:130) EAPs are the most predominant arenas for OSW. This implies that it is easier for OSWs to perform EAP tasks than it is for EAP practitioners to perform OSW tasks. Zastrow (2010:373) affirms that the development of EAPs has been a major factor in the emergence of OSW. It is for this reason that OSW is currently inaccurately considered synonymous with the EAP. The two fields are similar in certain aspects but also different in other areas, therefore, cannot be considered synonymous. EAPs are essentially specific performance-focused programmes whereas the scope of OSW appears much broader.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The literature reviewed in the previous chapter provided a historic background of the field of EAP and OSW respectively. Furthermore, it provided a theoretical overview of the two disciplines in terms of the client systems, functions, scope of practice as well as service delivery and practice models.

In an attempt to achieve the research goal of comparing OSW and EAPs, the researcher employed a systematic and purposeful plan to yield data on the two fields. Through this chapter, the researcher thus aims to introduce the research methods used in the study and to explain the rationale for the chosen methods.

Furthermore, this chapter identifies and describes the research design, type of research, research procedures and data quality. It presents the process used in administering the data collection instrument and the methods used to collect and analyse the data. An insight into the need for and how ethical considerations were maintained in this study is also provided in this chapter.

3.2. Type of Research

There are two main types of research, namely basic and applied research. According to the researcher, basic research is a suitable fit for the undertaken study as it aims to generate new knowledge and understanding for the discipline (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:9). Basic research “seeks empirical observations that can be used to formulate or refine a theory” (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:94).

The study was not tasked to bring about any changes or resolve any problems in the discipline, rather it was meant to explore, understand and describe the similarities and differences between OSW and EAP for the purpose of increasing knowledge of the two fields of practice.

As explained in chapter 1, this will further be achieved through explorative and descriptive research.

It can therefore be said that the broader research goal and the objectives of the research coincide with the type of research and thus are basic in that they are aimed at acquiring knowledge of OSW and EAPs by exploring and describing them in theory and in practice.

3.3. Research Design

Mark (1996:28) states that a research design is guided by what the research intends to investigate and how the researcher intends to collect the data. It can therefore be assumed that the research design of a project is in fact the blueprint that guides the research processes. This section describes the type of research design utilised by the researcher for the purpose of this study.

3.3.1. Case Studies

According to Chetty (2011:31) when it comes to data collection and analysis, a formulated plan is required to guide the research process. Because the study looked at the meaning that the identified participants gave to the real world, case studies were helpful in obtaining information regarding OSW and EAPs from the participants' context (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:320).

Case studies may be used to study specific issues viewed through one or more cases within a specific setting. Furthermore, they are able to explore cases through multiple data collection because they are qualitative in nature (Creswell, 2007:73).

3.3.1.1. Collective Case Studies

The collective case study was the identified type of case study for the research project as it assisted in illustrating one selected concern (Creswell, 2007:73). The collective case study allowed the researcher to choose between cases (EAPs and OSWs) and compare the responses between them for validation and the extension of theories (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:322).

The researcher looked at different practice models used in EAPs and OSW to get a clear understanding of the similarities and differences between the two disciplines. Creswell (2007:74) asserts that case studies are good when the researcher seeks to compare several cases that have boundaries.

3.3.2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Case Studies

The use of case studies had quite a few advantages for the research project. For one, the data collection was extensive because it drew on multiple sources of information. The use of cases also assisted in exploring and describing data in reality and explained the challenges of real life situations (Creswell, 2007:75). This type of research design was effective in that it allowed the data to be collected within the situation in which the activities take place (Zainal, 2007:4).

As with any other research design, the advantages of using case studies were coupled with a few shortcomings. The small number of subjects used in the case study provided little basis for scientific generalisation. The case studies were subjective rather than objective as they were based on participants' experiences and

perspectives. Lastly, conducting the case studies was a time consuming exercise (Zainal, 2007:5).

The rewards for conducting case studies certainly prevailed over the limitations. The use of case studies made the goal of the study achievable because it ensured that the researcher gained widespread knowledge about the two disciplines respectively, from the subjects' perspective and within the situation where the activities took place. With this knowledge and subjective perspectives from the participants, the researcher was able to gather information and deduce conclusions regarding the similarities and differences between OSW and EAPs.

3.4. Research Methods

This section will attempt to provide details of how the study was undertaken. The researcher will provide details on the study population and sampling, data collection and data analysis.

3.4.1. Study Population and Sampling

3.4.1.1. Population

A 'population' or universe constitutes all items or individuals that are under consideration in a field of inquiry. These individuals or objects in a certain population usually have similar characteristics (Kumar, 2008:14).

The population of the study included all registered members of the Employee Assistance Programmes Association of South Africa and the South African Occupational Social Workers Association. Hennick, Hutter and Bailey (2011:85) assert the importance of clearly defining a study population in research as this ultimately determines who will be recruited to participate in the study and how they will be recruited.

3.4.1.2. Sampling

According to Kumar (2008:14) a study of all objects or individuals is known as a census inquiry. This type of study is impractical and involves a great amount of money, time and energy. For the same reasons, including the potential sizes of the two organisations (EAPA-SA and SAOSWA), it would not have been realistic for the researcher to include all members in the study. Hence the researcher selected only a few individuals from the study population. The selected individuals constitute what is technically known as a sample. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:128) define a sample as a typical representation of the study population for which the research findings will be applied and generalised.

The researcher made use of probability sampling, the reason being that a list of names was provided by the Board of SAOSWA and EAPA-SA. Moreover, each person on the list had the same probability to be characteristically chosen (Strydom, 2011:228). The selection of potential participants from the name list was based on a random procedure.

Because the research project was a group activity, members of EAPA-SA and SAOSWA had to be equally distributed amongst the researchers. EAPA-SA provided a list of 167 members, whereas SAOSWA provided a list of 187. Random sampling was therefore the most appropriate kind of probability sampling to be chosen by the researcher. Each member of the respective boards had an equal chance to be chosen as part of the sample (Strydom, 2011:228).

Struwig and Stead (2001:124) present the term “purposeful random sampling” which best describes the sampling method utilised in the study as it is a random selection of a small sample. This sampling method is unique in that it places emphasis on an

information-rich sample and does not necessarily generalise to the broader population. Furthermore, this method helped the researcher remain impartial and increased credibility in the selection of a sample as it was not representatively random. Because the nature of the research was based on voluntary participation, the researcher understood that not all the members that were invited to participate would be willing to do so. For this reason, the researcher invited sixteen participants from each association, however, only six members from EAPA-SA and seven members from SAOSWA participated in the study.

3.4.2. Data collection

The data collection will be presented in two parts, namely data collection method and data collection instrument.

3.4.2.1. Data Collection Method

Semi-structured interviews, as information-collection methods, were used in this study. The interviews were used to gain detailed information from the specified group of participants (Driscoll, 2011:163). Interviews were also appropriate for the study because they are interactional and this allowed the researcher to create meaning out of the perceptions and views of the participants. The interviews allowed participants to describe their experiences in detail and reflect on their descriptions (Greeff, 2011:342).

Interviews, like all data collection methods, have benefits and shortcomings. Through interviews, the researcher was able to obtain large amounts of data in the shortest time and the collected data was in-depth. On the other hand, interview limitations include participants' unwillingness to share information or untrue responses from participants. To counteract such limitations the researcher attempted to build rapport

with participants before the interview and contracted with them. This phase of the interview helped the researcher build a trusting relationship with participants whilst also maintaining professional etiquette. The contracting phase of the interview addressed matters of confidentiality and highlighted the benefits that the research project will have on both disciplines.

The data was collected using e-mail interviews. The use of e-mail interviews as a method for collecting the data was particularly useful to the researcher in terms of including people in the study who were not easily accessible and who were geographically far apart.

The e-mail interviews allowed participants to take their time in answering the questions. This method allowed participants to take part while in an environment of their choice, which helped them relax and express themselves comfortably. Meho (2006:1290) states that this may generate rich and high quality data and implies that the e-mail questions must be more self-explanatory to achieve this.

3.4.2.2. Data Collection Instrument

Semi-structured interviews are flexible and they allowed the researcher to seek clarity and explore topics in more detail during the interview. Although the researcher had a set of pre-determined questions, the interviews were merely guided by these questions and not entirely dictated by them (Greeff, 2011:341-342). This approach thus removed the researcher from the expert position and gave participants an opportunity to articulate their own stories (Smith, Harré, & Langenhoven, 1995 in Greeff, 2011:352).

In order to achieve the required outcomes, an interview schedule was used to collect data. A schedule with possible questions was compiled to guide the process of the

interview. In doing so, the researcher considered the themes and questions to guide the interview but also the challenges that may have been stumbled upon in terms of constructing questions. The questions on the interview schedule were open-ended and limited to a few so that participants would give maximum information; but they still remained focused to ensure that participants gave specific information and covered specific areas (Greeff, 2011:352).

The researcher sent all primary interview questions in one e-mail message. The questions were sent after securing permission from participants (Meho, 2006:1290). According to Meho (2006:1290) the standards for conducting e-mail interviews depends on variations in the length of an interview schedule, the characteristics of the target population and the researcher's previous experiences in conducting e-mail interviews.

Based on the results of the pilot study, the researcher found it best to send the entire schedule at once. This was based on the premise that the participants appreciated answering questions all at once at a given time owing to their job demands. Participants found the exercise of back and forth emailing to be a time consuming exercise.

There is no research report that explicitly explains why one method of sending e-mail interview questions is better than the other. Meho and Tibbo (2003 in Meho, 2006:290) conducted a pretest to determine the best method for conducting e-mail interviews. The results indicated that the invite for participation, background about the researcher, consent form, instructions and interview schedule could be sent together in one e-mail. The author reiterates the importance of pretests in selecting the best method for each group of participants or individual research study.

3.4.3. Data Analysis

Qualitative studies aim to produce findings. According to Patton (2002 in Schurink, Fouché, & De Vos, 2011:397) qualitative data analysis is therefore a process of converting raw data into findings. Schwandt (2007 in Schurink et al, 2011:397) describes the process of data analysis as “an activity of making sense of, interpreting and theorising data”.

Closely related to this, is the notion of “trustworthiness” (Lietz & Zaya, 2010:191). This notion implies that the researcher realistically gather participants’ perspectives and represent them as accurately as possible in the findings.

For this reason this section will describe how the researcher collected and organised data, the process of thematic analysis and data quality in that order.

3.4.3.1. Collecting and organising data

According to Clarke, Braun, and Hayfield (2015:220) good data needs to be collected in order to analyse it thematically. The data should provide detailed insights into the research topic. According to this source, a pilot study is a useful way to ensure that the data collection instrument generates good quality data.

Prior to taking the necessary steps in analysing data thematically, the researcher collected data using e-mail interviews. Owing to the nature of the method used, it was not necessary to transcript the data because the data was already in written format. However, it was still important to organise and prepare the data for analysis. This process was done by copying the data from the e-mail to a word document and printing it out for easier analysis. In so doing, the researcher ensured that the anonymity and privacy of participants was maintained as promised in the informed consent.

3.4.3.2. The process of thematic data analysis

This section will describe the six phases recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006 in Clarke et al., 2015:231-241) for thematic analysis.

Phase 1: Familiarisation

The researcher read and reread the e-mail transcripts to make notes of anything that may have been unexpected or not obvious. Clarke et al. (2015:231) state that during this phase the researcher should spend enough time with the data. The entire data set should be read at least twice. According to the source, data should be read in a curious fashion.

In writing notes, the researcher recorded observations and insights. This phase was ended by making notes of the overall observations on the data set.

Phase 2: Coding

It is important to systematically and rigorously code in this phase of analysis as this builds solid foundation for the following phase (Clarke et al., 2015:234). This phase can be confused with the phase of identifying themes, however, coding enables deep engagement with data and produces analysis that goes beyond the obvious.

The researcher identified and labelled key features in the data that were relevant to the research question. Similar segments were grouped together in order to identify patterns in the data. It was important for the researcher to organise the coded data in preparation for the next phase.

Phase 3: Searching for Themes

Clarke et al. (2015:236) suggest that searching for themes involves creating a clear and plausible thematic map of data. During this phase, the researcher identified

themes in relation to the research question. The researcher clustered the codes together in an attempt to map out patterns in the data.

According to Clarke et al. (2015:236) themes should be underpinned by a “key analytic point” or a “central organising concept”. The source identifies between three theme levels:

- ❖ Overarching themes that are used to organise an analysis
- ❖ Themes that report on meanings related to the key analytic point
- ❖ Sub-themes that capture an important feature in the key analytic point.

The researcher used thematic maps to develop individual themes and to explore the relationship between the themes.

The phase of searching for themes ends when the data coding is captured on the thematic map and the map provides a clear answer to the research question (Clarke et al., 2015:238).

Phase 4: Reviewing Themes

The researcher reviewed themes in two ways: firstly, in relation to the coded data and secondly, in relation to the data set as a whole. According to Clarke et al. (2015:238) the first stage of this phase checks whether individual themes are a good fit in relation to the coded data. If the themes do not work, they may need to be revised. The second stage involves checking if the entire data set works. The analysis should address the research question and reflect the data contents. The key patterns and meaning in the data were captured in the individual themes and analysis as a whole.

Phase 5: Defining Themes

A useful step in elaborating themes and moving toward writing up the results is writing theme definitions (Clarke et al., 2015:240). The researcher defined each theme in an effort to ensure conceptual clarity. Theme definitions are “fairly short descriptions explaining the essence, scope and coverage, and boundaries of each theme” (Clarke et al., 2015:240). This step helped the researcher in developing commentary on the data.

Phase 6: Writing Up

Writing the report is the final step in analysing data. According to Clarke et al. (2015:241) writing and analysis in thematic analysis are not separate activities. The writing begins when the analysis starts.

In this step, the theme descriptions helped the researcher identify key points to present in the report. The writing developed the analysis further and the researcher was able to draw up conclusions across themes because they contributed to organising the analysis.

3.4.3.3. Data Quality

A research study should be representative of the participants’ perspectives as much as possible, this is a term referred to as “trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Lietz & Zayas, 2010:191). The researcher needed to take necessary steps during the research process to ensure that participants’ perspectives were realistically gathered and represented accurately in the research findings.

To ensure data trustworthiness in the study, the researcher considered the following strategies (Lietz & Zayas, 2010:195-197):

I. Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985 in Lietz & Zayas, 2010:195) describe transferability as the degree of appropriateness and practicality of findings to theory, practice and future research. In the study transferability was established by providing readers with thick descriptions of phenomena, indicating the applicability of the study's findings to other contexts and/or situations. The researcher attempted to describe aspects of data collection that provided a richer understanding of the research setting. These efforts will allow outside readers to also make transferability judgements.

II. Auditability

In order to achieve auditability the researcher ensured that research procedures were correctly documented so that outsiders to the research could gain a clearer understanding.

The research project was a group activity, thus peer debriefing was used as a measure to ensure auditability. In an effort to enhance the quality of the project, the researcher consulted experienced colleagues to provide feedback on the research processes. This technique further enhanced the research process through problem identification and generating new ideas related to the research methodology (Lietz & Zayas, 2010:195-196). Creswell and Miller (2000 in Lietz & Zayas, 2010:196) assert that for projects that stem from a critical standpoint, peer debriefing is indispensable.

III. Confirmability

Confirmability is best achieved when people outside of the research are able to verify the research findings. The researcher ensured that the research findings were based on the words of participants rather than the researcher's own biases. According to

Lietz and Zayas (2010:197) in order to achieve confirmability, a study needs to demonstrate a link between the findings and the collected data.

The researcher made use of an audit trail as a strategy to confirm research procedures. A written account of the research processes including data collection, interpretation and analysis was kept throughout (Lietz & Zayas, 2010:198). Furthermore, the researcher attempted to indicate and clarify why certain decisions were taken during the research process.

3.4.4. Pilot Study

The researcher should have a thorough background knowledge about the research problem before embarking on a scientific research (Strydom, 2002:120). The pilot study allows the researcher to get to know the research project. For these reasons, the pilot study formed an essential part of this research process.

The pilot study helped the researcher in determining if the methods to be implemented would be effective or not. It was further conducted to determine whether the data collection instrument would yield the relevant information. The researcher used the feedback from the pilot study to readjust the interview questions on the interview schedule. This was done to ensure that participants understood the questions in the same way. Furthermore, piloting the questions gave an indication of how long the interview may take in real time.

3.4.4.1. Literature Study

According to Mark (1996:20) a review in literature is important in discovering how others have studied the research problem and other approaches that the researcher may have overlooked. This review of literature helped the researcher position the research interests and possible findings within the specified theoretical framework.

Furthermore, the literature study provided the data needed to compare with the research findings. This also helped the researcher determine if there was indeed a correlation between theory and practice. It was for these reasons that the researcher conducted an in-depth literature review as presented in Chapter 2.

The literature study includes reviews of selected national and international literature on EAPs and OSW and because literature on the two fields is very rare, the researcher had to rely on some outdated sources. The researcher used books, articles, published reports, unpublished theses, conference papers, the internet and periodicals to provide for a good literature review.

3.4.4.2. Pilot test of Interview Schedule

Following the approval of the semi-structured interview schedule by the ethics committee, and permission granted by SAOSWA and EAPA-SA, the researcher commenced with the pilot testing of the interview schedule. The pilot study was conducted with one member from the EAPA-SA and one from the SAOSWA. The participants in the pilot study were included in the study for two reasons: firstly, the responses the participants gave were valuable to the study and secondly, the researcher had a limited number of participants.

The researcher received the following feedback from the pilot study:

- ❖ Sending the questions one at a time was a time consuming exercise and this discouraged the participants from completing the interview.
- ❖ Some questions appeared redundant and participants felt they had answered the same question more than once.

- ❖ Owing to the scarcity of resources in certain departments, the informed consent would not be able to be scanned and returned to the researcher after signing.

Following the pilot study, the researcher went through the questions with the participants and asked for suggestions. The researcher looked for patterns in the feedback and used this to revise the interview schedule.

The commonality in the feedback lay in time management. It was therefore important that the researcher ensured that the interview did not inconvenience the participants in any way. This feedback also prompted the researcher to send all primary questions in one e-mail message and ask any follow-up questions thereafter, if need be. As mentioned earlier, the questions were only sent after securing permission from participants. In the e-mail invite the researcher attached the informed consent and indicated that an affirmative response to the e-mail would suffice for informed consent on their part. Meho (2006:1290) explains how pretests help in determining the best method to use in e-mail interviews for each group of participants or individual study.

3.4.4.3. Feasibility of the study

The pilot study was also conducted to determine the feasibility of the study and to determine whether there would be factors that might prevent the study from delivering the desired results.

The researcher believes that the study was certainly feasible. Participants in the research were made available to the researcher through the EAPA-SA and SAOSWA. Both Boards were informed about the research and permission was granted to invite and engage members of the Boards in the research respectively.

Therefore, access to participants was not an impediment as the member associations had provided the database with contact details of members. This contributed to the success of the research study. Furthermore, using e-mail interviews ensured that members from different geographical locations could be included in the study with very minimal cost implications.

3.5. Practical Application of Ethical Considerations

Ethics may be thought of as morals, telling apart what is right from what is wrong. In relation to this study, ethics guided the research process and ensured that participants were protected. Consideration of ethics throughout the research was important because the research study included research on human participants.

In chapter 1, the researcher explained the ethical considerations from a theoretical point of view. In this chapter, the researcher will elaborate on how the ethical considerations were applied and how they guided the research process.

3.5.1. Voluntary Participation and Informed Consent

Participation in the study was voluntary and members of EAPA-SA and SAOSWA were informed of this. The researcher obtained permission from the potential participants before involving them in the study (Driscoll, 2011:155). Participants were given an opportunity to withdraw from the study at any given point without giving a reason. They were assured that their decision to withdraw would not affect their relationship with the researcher or the respective Board.

Informed consent is a matter closely related to voluntary participation. It was important to acquire informed consent from participants as this indicated that the participants understood the research process, the goals, strengths and limitations, as well as the duration of the study (Strydom, 2011:119). Written letters of consent were

attached to the e-mail invitations sent to potential participants and an affirmative response to the invite sufficed as informed consent on the participants' side.

3.5.2. Confidentiality

The participants' identities and their contribution to the study were kept strictly confidential. Confidentiality and reporting are some of the ethical issues in research (Vithal & Jansen, 2003:26). The University of Pretoria archives all raw data for a period of 15 years after completion of the research.

The researcher further ensured anonymity of participants by creating false names for each participant during the writing up of the final report.

3.5.3. Compensation

There was no financial compensation offered for participation in the research project. The researcher kept all costs to a minimum to ensure that participants did not incur any costs as a result of participating in the study.

3.5.4. Actions and Competence of the Researcher

The researcher, as a trained social work professional, has previous experience in conducting research. The Social Services Code of Ethics further guided the practice of the research ensuring that the researcher remained objective. This was important because the researcher had an ethical obligation to ensure competence in undertaking the study, therefore, contributing to the quality of the data (Strydom, 2011:124).

3.5.5. Publication of Findings

The final report was compiled accurately and objectively. The researcher ensured that the report was clear and concise for readers to understand. The information was

clearly conveyed and the procedures of the research were handled appropriately (Strydom, 2011:126).

For the well-deserved recognition, participants as well as both Boards that contributed to the success of the research were informed of the results. Still, confidentiality remained a priority of the researcher and therefore participants' identities were kept anonymous.

3.5.6. Ethics Committee

The research proposal was reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria prior to commencing with the research. Submission of the proposal ensured that clarity was provided to the faculty and the University regarding the nature of the research project. The role of the committee was to ensure protection of participants and ethical researchers.

Once the committee was convinced about the minimal risks of the research, the ethical clearance was granted to the researcher to continue with the research. The researcher ensured adherence to the agreed procedures of ethical research.

3.6. Summary

This chapter provided a detailed account of the qualitative research methodology adopted in this empirical study. The purpose of the chapter was to provide, in detail, clear and concise statements describing every step that was taken by the researcher in carrying out the study. The research design, data collection, data analysis and data quality were explained in this chapter. The chapter concluded by providing a detailed account of the application of ethical considerations.

The next chapter outlines the findings of the qualitative data analysis. The findings are organised around the study's research questions.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES AND OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the analysis and discussion of the empirical findings obtained from the interviews. The data is analysed according to the objectives of the study. The findings in this chapter are linked to the literature cited in chapter 2. As mentioned in the previous chapter, thematic analysis was used as a method of qualitative data analysis. Therefore, the research findings are presented and discussed according to themes and categories. Owing to the qualitative nature of the study, the study findings will be reported with the discussion simultaneously. The researcher will attempt to outline the findings from EAPs and OSWs respectively and base the discussion on these findings.

The conducted interviews, as with any other method of qualitative data collection, yielded large amounts of data. However, not all the data collected was relevant. Thus, the researcher attempted to focus on exploring and analysing the data that was relevant in answering the research questions and subsequently the research goals and objectives.

Thirteen members of EAPA-SA and SAOSWA took part in the study. Seven participants were from the SAOSWA and six were from EAPA-SA. Of the thirteen participants, two formed part of the pilot study and were included in the analysis.

In an effort to protect participants' identities, participant names were removed from interviews and replaced with alphabetical characters. Participants from EAPA-SA

were labeled with single alphabets (e.g. Participant A), while participants from SAOSWA were labelled with double alphabets (e.g. Participant AA). This helped tell apart responses from EAP professionals and/or practitioners and occupational social workers. The researcher used extracts from the email interviews as they were and did not alter or change them.

The following section will provide the profile of participants in tabular form, followed by a detailed description of the participants' profile.

4.2. Table 4.1: Participants' Profile

No.	Gender	Age	Area	Field	Job Title	No. of years in EAP/OSW Field	No. of years as a Professional (e.g. SW)	First entry into the Profession
A	Female	25	Mafikeng	EAP	EAP Counsellor	9 months	2 years	EAP Intern at the Dept. of Finance.
B	Female	33	Mafikeng	EAP	IEHW	6 years	11 years	Statutory services at Child Welfare SA
C	Female	37	Pietermaritzburg	EAP	Employee Health & Wellness Professional	3 years	10 years	SW at a Service Point
D	Female	41	Empangeni	EAP	Employee Wellness Specialist	19 years	19 years	EAP/SW Intern
E	?	43	Bhisho	EAP	Assistant Director: Employee Wellness	6 years	16 years	SW at P.E Deaf Association
F	Male	35	?	EAP	EAP Manager	11 years	11 years	Generic SW at the

								Dept. of Social Development
AA	Female	43	Pretoria	OSW	Warrant Officer	6 years	6 years	Police Officer at SAPS
BB	Female	43	Pretoria	OSW	Assistant Director	16 years	20 years	Generic SW at Gauteng Association for People with Disabilities
CC	Female	Soon to go on retirement	Pretoria	OSW	Lieutenant Colonel Assistant Director	11 years	27 years	SW at the Dept. of Health
DD	Male	36	Pretoria	OSW	Assistant Director	7 years	11 years	Jnr. SW at an NGO
EE	Male	44	Elandspoor t	OSW	Social Worker	3 years	5 years	EHW coordinator at SAPS
FF	Female	39	Pretoria	OSW	Social Worker	3 years	3 years	SW at SAPS
GG	Female	38	Johannesburg	OSW	Senior Social Worker	6 years	12 years	SW Intern at the Dept. of Social Development

The majority of participants were female. Although the study did not achieve an equal balance of gender, both genders were included in the study. A wide range of age groups formed part of the participants' profile, ranging from 25 to those soon to go on retirement. Participants were from all over the country, however, most

participation came from the Gauteng province, followed by North-West, Kwa-Zulu Natal and then the Eastern Cape.

All participants have a qualification in social work, although this was not indicated in the table owing to a lack of space. One member from EAPA-SA had a post-graduate qualification in EAP. The participants have all been in the profession of social work for a number of years, ranging from two years to twenty seven years. The number of years in the respective fields, however, ranges from nine months to nineteen years. The participants fill different positions in the respective fields which contributed to the diversity of the collected data.

Of note is the fact that most participants in the study started off in the generic field and began specialising in EAP and OSW a couple of years later. Some participants started off as interns in the field and worked their way up to permanent positions.

The profile of the participants clearly corresponds with the requirements for practice mentioned in the literature review chapter.

4.3. Identified Major Themes

Four major themes were identified from the participants' narratives:

- ❖ Core areas of intervention
- ❖ Therapeutic component
- ❖ Registration with a statutory body/ professional association
- ❖ Participants' views on OSW and EAP

The researcher attempted to break down the major themes into smaller subthemes and categories. These will be demonstrated in tabular form and described in detail. The themes contributed to the comparison of EAPs and OSW as they provided the

headings within which to analyse and discuss the similarities and differences between the two disciplines.

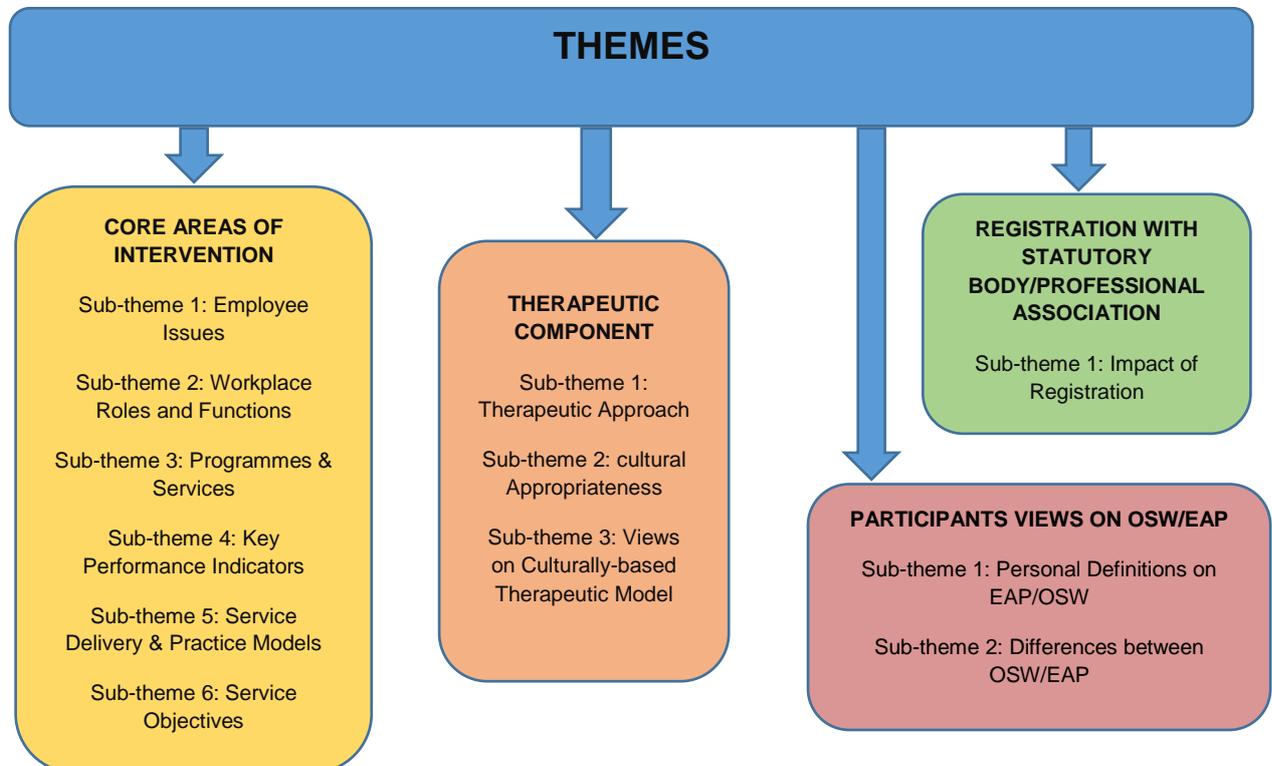


Figure 4.1: Themes and Sub-themes

4.3.1. THEME 1: CORE AREAS OF INTERVENTION

The purpose of this discussion was to explain the core areas of intervention within which EAPs and OSW render their services. This theme unfolds under the following subthemes:

- ❖ Employee issues
- ❖ Workplace roles and functions
- ❖ Programmes and services
- ❖ Key performance indicators
- ❖ Service delivery and practice models
- ❖ Service objectives

4.3.1.1. Sub-theme 1: Employee Issues

The theory in the literature review chapter indicated that EAPs and OSW help employees and their families deal with personal and work-related issues. This discussion focused on the kinds of issues that the respective fields deal with.

Participants in the field of EAP indicated that the employee issues that they dealt with ranged from mental, physical and productivity issues. These participants described the kinds of issues in broad terms. The following excerpts attest to this:

“Personal and work issues that contribute to the productivity of officials” (Participant C)

“Health related interventions like physical wellbeing (exercise programmes)” (Participant D)

“HIV in the workplace and policy awareness... we deal with stress, traumatised employees, employees who are not productive and absenteeism” (Participant F)

These excerpts further reiterate the notion that these issues have a direct bearing on productivity in the workplace. The issues therefore go beyond employees alone, and can be related to the organisations as well.

Other participants were more specific in naming the different kinds of employee issues. They provided lists of issues that ranged from stress, trauma, substance abuse, absenteeism, capacity health, bereavement, financial problems, and interpersonal relations between family members and colleagues (Participant A, B, C, F).

In the OSW field, participants also provided employee issues that they must deal with. Some participants described the issues broadly, indicating that the issues were

work and non-work related (Participant DD, FF). Other participants provided detailed lists of employee issues stating that the issues included family related issues, substance abuse, relationships, sexual harassment, absenteeism, stress, finances, housing, trauma, bereavement, interpersonal relations and employee development (Participant AA, CC, EE). An example of a list provided by one of the participants follows.

“Retirement, trauma and resilience programmes, colleague sensitivity, colleague-commander relations, employee development” (Participant GG).

It appeared, from the findings, that participants in management positions also dealt with employee issues; although this is done in certain divisions. Participant BB confirms this by stating *“Domestic Violence [DV] and sexual harassment [SH] is currently my main field of operation as I am managing the social work services’ DVSH Desk”*.

It becomes clear, based on the findings in this theme that EAPs and OSW deal with similar employee issues. The issues may be work or non-work related, but may also be in relation to the organisation’s well-being in terms of employee performance.

4.3.1.2. Sub-theme 2: Workplace Roles and Functions

According to the theory in the literature review chapter, EAPs aim at improving employee and workplace effectiveness and are important in the maintenance and improvement of health and productivity in employees (Phillips, 2004:64). Based on the findings in the aforementioned sub-theme the same can be said about OSW aims. The purpose of this discussion was to uncover how the respective fields work at improving and maintaining health and productivity by exploring the roles and functions in the workplace.

The participants in the EAP field listed the following functions: counselling, designing and managing programmes, as well as training and development (Participant A, C, D). One participant broadly listed two roles, namely, enabler and educator (Participant B). These two roles can be linked to the functions listed by the other participants as employees may be enabled through counseling and educated through training and development programmes.

The roles and functions of participants in management positions are to promote work-life balance in the organisation and to supervise counsellors and wellness officers. Participant F asserts this by stating *“I am an Assistant Director responsible for wellness management pillar, I supervise counsellors and wellness officers. My core function is to promote the quality of work-life in the department”*. It can therefore be inferred that although different practitioners and professionals fill different roles in one organisation, within the EAP department, they all aim to ensure the wellbeing of employees.

Within the OSW field it became clear that various intervention methods were used to deal with employee issues. The roles and functions of participants lie in these interventions. Participants indicated that their role was to provide OSW services to employees by means of proactive programmes. It appeared that most of the functions listed by participants were actually in line with the OSWPM discussed in chapter 2. The following citations demonstrate this:

“Render social work services through restorative interventions, i.e. case work and group work; render social work services through community work model i.e. events and projects” (Participant GG).

“Render interventions to employees through restorative, promotive and workplace interventions” (Participant EE).

Those in management positions then supervise the outlined functions carried out by OSWs. Participant DD indicated *“I supervise the occupational social work related activities which includes restorative, promotive, work-person and workplace intervention”*. Participant BB also confirmed *“managing the DVSH Desk and supervising social workers who are rendering services within their respective divisions (all methods; case, group work and community work), reactively and proactively (Occupational Social Work Model)”*.

The EAP participants listed their functions and roles; these functions were very candid and need to be elaborated further. The OSW participants on the other hand listed their functions in terms of the occupational social work practice model. These functions may not be clear unless one has knowledge of the practice model. Nonetheless, the findings confirm that the functions rendered by EAPs and OSW include case work, group work and community work. The difference lies in that the functions of OSWs are rendered within different positions in the OSWPM. Furthermore, it can be confirmed that the theory on the functions in chapter 2 and functions stipulated in the findings are similar. Although the EAP functions are expressed in more detail in the literature review chapter, still, the information correlates.

4.3.1.3. Sub-theme 3: Programmes and Services

The purpose of this discussion was to explain the programmes and services rendered by OSW and EAPs in practice. The researcher already described these

theoretically in the literature review chapter under the heading scope of practice and types of services.

This theme was linked to the theme on workplace roles and functions as some participants referred to their responses on the previous theme. Some participants, however, described the programmes in more detail and listed the following: financial education, stress management, parenting, conflict management, substance abuse, wellness days, pre-retirement, diversity management, and chronic disease management (Participant D, E). In addition to this, Participant C added "*prevention workshops, provision of confidential counselling services, assessment of troubled employees, referral of troubled employees, follow-up on referred employees, reintegrate employees to the work environment, provide training to managers and supervisors...*", among others. Participant B stated "*I am implementing 3 programmes being wellness management, health and productivity management and HIV and AIDS management programmes. Services- educational, counselling, support and referral services*".

The above mentioned programmes and services are closely connected to the EAP scope of practice identified by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:4-26) as indicated in the literature review chapter. Although the Standards document lists the guidelines in broad terms, the description of each guideline correlates with the findings.

Services rendered by OSWs range from individual, group and community work. Participant FF, DD, GG, CC and BB in the study confirmed this statement. Some participants indicated that group work and community work include programmes,

workshops and employee development. The following excerpts from the findings confirm this:

“individual/couple counselling, debriefing, group work, stress management, anger management, personal financial management, sober life-style, domestic violence and sexual harassment” (Participant DD).

“Casework with individuals including significant others if needs be. Group work for section that experiences challenges..., proactive programmes 4 awareness” (Participant CC).

Of interest in the OSW field is how the OSWPM seems to guide most of the work carried out by OSWs. The programmes and services rendered by OSWs can further be grouped in terms of the interventions listed in the OSWPM namely, restorative, promotive, work-person and workplace intervention. This notion is confirmed by the following extract from participant FF:

“Restorative interventions: Individual /group sessions are being offered to address personal challenges... Promotive interventions: Programmes, group work sessions, projects and events are presented at stations, units, ports of entries etc. Programmes includes: Various Financial Wellness, relationship (work, romantic and parent child-relationship) programmes, Personal Wellness, Colleague Sensitivity... Work-person interventions: Entails presentation of programmes/ group work sessions/ events to enhance work relationships between colleagues and/or commanders. Work-place interventions: The focus is on contributing towards the enhancement of the workplace in terms of providing expertise during policy-making processes, operating procedure development transfer cases etc”.

4.3.1.4. Sub-theme 4: Key Performance Indicators

The purpose of discussing key performance indicators (KPI) as a subtheme was to explore the connection between organisational expectations of EAP and OSW and what is actually done in practice. This theme indicates clearly what different organisations aim to achieve with EAPs and OSWs and how this is evaluated.

EAP participants listed their KPIs according to the different organisations' expectations. The commonality in the listed KPIs lies in that they are meant to ensure that EAPs complete specific duties to contribute to the wellbeing of employees. The following excerpts confirm this:

“HIV and AIDS and STI & TB education, awareness and prevention programmes..., employee assistance..., physical activity programme..., employee wellness..., office administration and support...” (Participant A).

“My performance indicators are healthy, dedicated, responsive and a productive workforce... these are measured through compliance of the employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework” (Participant C).

Additional to the aforementioned, participant F who occupies a management position manages and supervises the subordinates that perform these duties. The performance of other EAPs is evaluated according to the amount of work done. For instance participant E stated *“100% counselling offered to employees, number of employees Health and Wellness sessions conducted”*.

In the OSW field, the work performed is evaluated by reaching a certain target. According to participant DD *“social work related services are measured against the total establishment of the assigned work community”* whereas participant EE stated *“I am expected to present certain programs per annual. I will be measured based on*

whether I achieved the target'. It appeared that the KPI were also based on the execution of standard administrative practice, compliance with standards and management information, facilitation of wellness screenings and rendering proactive programmes (Participant GG).

KPIs differ from one organisation to another and are mostly based on the company's service objectives. Although organisations' aim achieve a healthier workforce through the EAP or OSW, the strategies employed will differ. However, there appears to be an obvious commonality between the findings of KPIs and those on programmes and services.

4.3.1.5. Sub-theme 5: Service Delivery and Practice Models

Service delivery and practice models guide the way in which services are offered. It is therefore important for the purpose of the study to discuss the models that guide the interventions of EAPs and OSWs. The research will further compare the findings to those mentioned in the literature review chapter.

Most of the participants in the EAP field did not have a response to the question on models employed in the field. This could have meant that either the question was unclear or that the participants were not aware of any model being utilised in the field. Participant E pointed out the in-house model. This model is in line with the theory on EAP service delivery models mentioned in chapter 2. Participant F, on the other hand stated "*our service delivery model follows the strategic framework of employee health and wellness by DPSA and EAPA-SA standards document*". The participant further listed the four pillars of the strategic framework and the clinical and non-clinical standards that the organisation follows in rendering services. This participant described the model differently, however, this may also be thought of as

an in-house model. This assumption is based on the premise that an organisation that employs an in-house model of EAP offers treatment services internally. Further to this, the EAP practitioner/professional is fully employed by the organisation.

The theory in the literature review chapter gives a detailed description of the OSWPM, developed by the SANDF, in terms of the transition from micro to macro practice. This model centres around the ecosystems theory, focusing on the individual employee as well as the organisation at large. This notion was confirmed by most participants in the study that listed the OSWPM as a model used in practice. Participant CC, DD, FF and GG listed the four positions from which OSWs practice namely, restorative, promotive, work-person and workplace interventions.

4.3.1.6. Sub-theme 6: Service Objectives

The theory on the history and development of EAPs and OSW indicates that initially the two disciplines were introduced to ensure the wellbeing of employees and to promote productivity.

The EAP participants concur with this rationale, indicating that their service objectives are to ensure the optimal functioning of employees and a healthy workforce (Participant A, B, & D). Other participants went into detail about the service objective employed in their organisations. This is indicated in the following excerpts:

“Promote healthy lifestyle habits, render confidential counselling services, prevent decline in employee performance, enhance quality of life of all employees”
(Participant C).

“To promote the total wellness of the organisation and employees, to also promote the culture physical wellness in the lives of employees, to promote resilience

workforce, to promote a friendly and accommodative organisational culture..."

(Participant F).

It is therefore clear from the findings that the service objectives of EAP are based on the performance of employees in an organisation, physical and mental health of employees and a conducive working environment for all employees.

In the OSW field, the service objectives are related to the work-life balance, enhancement of individual and organisational wellness (Participant DD, FF, CC, & BB). Participant GG, on the other hand, indicated "*to ensure that personal problems do not interfere negatively with work, empower employees to be productive and resilient at work*". These statements imply that the OSWs work to ensure that they deal with employee problems that may affect job performance negatively and thus avoid productivity issues that may occur as a result of those problems.

Based on the discussion of this theme, it can be assumed that OSW and EAPs are similar in terms of their service objectives. Both disciplines aim at ensuring a healthy workforce and maintaining productivity.

4.3.2. THEME 2: THERAPEUTIC COMPONENT

The theme on the therapeutic component of OSW and EAPs aimed at providing an indication of the similarities and differences in terms of the way in which therapy is rendered in practice and provided information on the current issues of cultural differences in therapy. This theme will be discussed under three sub-themes, namely:

- ❖ Current therapeutic approach
- ❖ Cultural appropriateness of therapeutic approach
- ❖ Views on culturally-based therapeutic models

4.3.2.1. Sub-theme 1: Current Therapeutic Approach

EAPs render services to individuals, managers, supervisors and the organisation. Therapeutic approaches are usually used during work with individuals. Most of the participants in the EAP field agreed on short-term therapy as an approach utilised in work with individuals (Participant F, D & C). Adding to this, participant C lists more approaches, namely “*family therapy, person-centred, cognitive behaviour therapy...*” whereas participant E refers to a “*holistic systems approach model where I work with the individual and the environment*”.

The listed therapeutic approaches in the EAP field are all in line with the ecosystems theory that focuses on the individual and the environment in which one functions. The solution focused brief therapy mentioned is also in line with the theory in the literature review chapter as EAPs are expected to render efficient therapeutic services in the shortest amount of time.

On the other hand, one EAP participant and several OSWs mentioned the strengths-based perspective (Participant A, AA, EE, FF & DD). This perspective also forms part of the characteristics of brief therapy mainly because exploring clients’ strengths and resources and using these to intervene with the client takes less time than problem-focused intervention. Other approaches mentioned by OSWs include “*solution focus, strength focused or task focused approach*” (Participant GG). With the inclusion of the systems theory, participant CC, DD and BB concurred with the listed approaches. The systems theory is an overarching model that guides smaller approaches, such as those listed above.

4.3.2.2. Sub-theme 2: Cultural Appropriateness of Therapeutic Approaches

The EAPs' responses in this discussion may be divided into two categories. Some participants believed that the short-term therapeutic approach and the strengths-based approach were suitable across all cultural groups, whereas other participants in the EAP field believed that the approaches were not culturally appropriate. In the first category, the following excerpts confirm the participants' affirmative responses:

"...there are different therapeutic approaches for different cases, therefore each and every one of them is applied relevantly depending on the cases presented" (Participant A).

"...this model is ideal and effective for people of all races and cultures. The reason for my submission is that employees of all races and cultures because it helps restore the wellbeing of them in short term possible and get them back to normal functioning" (Participant F).

Participant D and E, however, did not agree. According to these participants, the approaches were not suitable for certain cultural groups because the client systems are from different backgrounds and these approaches seem to be a one size fits all. Participant D alluded *"the approach is suitable for the workplace, although for certain cultural groups I find it a bit challenging due to minimal understanding, background and literacy levels"*. This participant believes that more could be done to develop approaches that cater for African cultures.

Within the OSW field, it seemed as though most participants believed that the approaches were suitable for all cultural groups. The participants gave multiple reasons for this. Participant DD stated *"because our approach is based on values of non-judgmental and individualism"*. Participant AA and CC indicated that the

approaches are appropriate because they help build resilience in employees. An interesting excerpt was extracted from participant BB who stated that *“you will never be able to satisfy everybody, irrespective of race, culture or gender (SAPS is too diverse for that). One needs to set a standard for all social workers to have direction and not create a ‘circus’ of service rendering”*. This extract was particularly interesting because it was forthright; it makes one question if a culturally-appropriate therapeutic approach is really necessary as there does not seem to be many reported cases of approaches being inappropriate. Furthermore, South Africa has too many cultures within different races, but also within the different communities in which people grow up. Therefore, perhaps a culturally-based therapeutic approach may not be practical. One participant disagreed with this. Participant GG stressed the importance of being *“conversant”* with all races, beliefs and practices because clients are from different backgrounds.

Based on the findings, it becomes clear that more OSWs believe their approaches are culturally appropriate whereas the views of the EAPs can be equally divided in two. Perhaps the reason for this lies in the different work environments, which also possess their own respective organisational cultures. The OSWs and some of the EAPs may thus feel that their approaches are appropriate for the kind of client system (employees and organisations) that they serve.

4.3.2.3. Sub-theme 3: Views on a Culturally-based Therapeutic Model

All of the participants in the EAP field emphasized the importance of a culturally-based therapeutic model, although one believed that this is not a challenge in the field (Participant F). Participant E stated *“it is long overdue. It will also address the diversity in the workplace and will attract people to wellness more as currently the programme is viewed as a clinical programme”*. It also appeared as though the

participants believe that the low usage of services was a result of a lack of a culturally-based model. This notion was further confirmed by Participant D who indicated that *“due to different cultures sometimes I find there is a minimal understanding in certain groups to understand the concept of counselling”*.

OSW participants shared almost similar views in terms of the need for a culturally-based model. Participant GG, CC, DD and EE all agreed that a need for such a model exists because diverse people cannot be treated using one formula. The following excerpt demonstrates this:

“My understanding is that we work with individuals that are from families» communities» societies at large with different cultures. A social worker or a therapist has to be diverse & broad-minded and knowledgeable. We cannot generalise when we assist client or engaging them in a therapy but we are guided by different theories (mentioned above) and tends to have a “personal practice theory” that will guide you what processes to follow” (Participant CC).

4.3.3. THEME 3: REGISTRATION WITH A STATUTORY BODY/PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

In chapter 2, theory indicated that registration with a professional association and/or statutory body is a requirement for practice in both EAP and OSW. However, the impact of this registration or the lack thereof remains unclear. The purpose of this discussion was to uncover how registering with a statutory body influences work and the consequences of not registering.

4.3.3.1. Sub-theme 1: Impact of Registration

The EAP professionals and/or practitioners seemed to understand the reason behind registration with a professional association. Most of the participants understood the

importance of registering as well as the consequences of not registering with a professional body. The participants indicated that registration with a professional body guides practice and ensures the protection of service users. For instance, Participant F stated *“it helps with ensuring the work is done by licensed professionals which is important, further it ensures that we always respect the rights of our clients”*. Most of the other participants agreed with this and shared similar sentiments (Participant B, C, D & A). Further to this, Participant C also indicated that registration ensured that *“I am covered in a long run in case there are grievances or accusations regarding my work”*. This statement proved that registration protects the client, but it also protects the professional or practitioner.

The participants alluded that the lack of registration came with consequences. According to Participant A and B one is not allowed to practice with registering without a professional association and statutory body. Participant A refers to this as an *“illegal offence which can result in one being removed from the council register”*.

The OSWs seemed to agree with the EAPs regarding registration with a professional association. The participants all seemed to be in agreement about the importance of registering. They believe that registration with a statutory body guides the practice and sets a standard of service delivery; it helps OSWs conduct themselves in an ethical manner and protects the professionals and the profession itself (Participant CC, EE, FF, DD, AA, BB, & GG). The following extracts provide evidence of these views:

“It is a regulatory body that helps us to adhere to ethics and values of the social worker” (Participant EE).

“Even the clients will have a belief in our work that it is authentic and professional, that we do things uniformly” (Participant GG).

The participants were also in agreement about the consequences stating that the lack of registration may lead to one being unable to practice (Participant DD, AA & CC). Participant GG also believed that the lack of registration would lead to professionals not being accountable to anyone. Participant BB agreed by stating that *“everybody will do as they please. The profession will become ‘a joke’, not taken serious by anyone”*.

Based on the findings, it is clear that registration with a statutory body is important for multiple reasons, namely, the protection of the client, the professional and the profession itself. Both fields are in agreement on this theme. However, it also appears that the participants do not clearly understand the difference between professional membership and statutory registration as they provided similar responses to the question of statutory registration and professional membership.

4.3.4. THEME 4: VIEWS ON EAP AND OSW

This theme is the fourth and final theme in the analysis. The discussion is based on the views of OSW and EAP regarding their disciplines. These perspectives will be discussed under two subthemes, namely:

- ❖ Personal definition of EAP/OSW
- ❖ Differences between OSW and EAP

4.3.4.1. Sub-theme 1: Personal Definitions of EAP and OSW

Participants were asked to describe EAPs and OSW in their own words.

Participants in the EAP field described EAP as a work-based programme aimed at assisting troubled employees deal with issues and improving productivity in the

workplace (Participant B, A & D). Participant A defined EAP and OSW in the same way, using them interchangeably i.e. *“Employee Assistance Programmes/Occupational Social Work refers to the professional practice within the workplace that is aimed at promoting and enhancing the wellbeing of the employees and ensuring work-life balance in the workplace”*. This description implies that the two disciplines are similar in all aspects.

Participants in the OSW field provided similar definitions differently. Most of the definitions described OSW from a professional standpoint. The following excerpts explain this:

“Occupational social work is an academic discipline and profession that concerns itself with individuals, families, groups and communities in an effort to enhance social functioning and overall wellbeing” (Participant EE).

“OSW services gives a social worker a chance to provide expert services to both the employee and the employer bringing about a balance in the organisation” (Participant CC).

These excerpts imply that OSW is a professional and specialised discipline, implying that the EAP is not a profession.

Other participants provided broader definitions and almost similar descriptions to EAPs indicating that OSW is a work-based programme that helps employees deal with personal problems and ensures that these do not interfere with work (Participant DD & GG). Participant BB on the other hand provided a definition for EAP and one for OSW in an attempt to indicate the difference between the two fields:

“EAP: Done by any person, not trained in a specific occupation, only assisting the employee with problems he/she is experiencing. Not

taking the workplace into consideration – workplace not the client. OSW: Services focus on the interface between the employee and his/her environment. Services are not only focused on the employee as client, but also the organization as client and the relationship between the employer and employee”.

Most of the definitions provided by both fields were similar. Some of the definitions that aimed to indicate a difference in the fields did so by demonstrating OSW as a professional field. The subsequent theme exposes the participants' views on the differences between the two fields.

4.3.4.2. Sub-theme 2: Differences between EAP and OSW

During the discussion about the differences and similarities of OSW and EAP, three categories emerged. Some participants felt the disciplines were similar, some thought they were different and others felt that they overlap and are interrelated to some extent.

The participants that believed that EAP and OSW are similar indicated that both fields focused on the well-being of the employee, a healthy work environment and increasing productivity in the workplace (Participant B, FF, EE & GG). The following excerpts demonstrate this:

“Yes, both are focusing on enhancing the wellness of the workplace and the workforce” (Participant FF).

“Yes, I feel that only terms are being used interchangeably as the focus of both is on the addressing employee’s challenges and their needs as well as their families and in turn management of the organisation benefiting through improvement of production and possibly less workplace accidents being reported” (Participant B).

Some participants believed that OSW and EAP were different. Most of the participants in this category believed that the difference between the fields was based on the premise that the one is broader than the other. The following excerpts validate this notion:

“The difference I guess is that OSW is profession specific whereas EAP is broad/wide if I may say so” (Participant CC).

“NO: Occupational Social Work uses the specific skills gained to render a professional service (degree obtained). Therapy are done, not counselling and workshops are conducted using group work dynamics and techniques and not just training. OSW focusses on both the employee and the employee and not only the employee. OSW’s main objective is to restore productivity in the workplace and not to only keep the employee ‘happy’” (Participant BB).

These extract prove what the previous theme indicated, that participants believe that the two fields are different because they view OSW as a more professional and expertise-oriented field than the EAP.

The final category included participants who believed that EAPs and OSW are related and interlinked. Participants in this category believed that the two disciplines have minor differences and similarities (Participant D, A, F & DD). According to Participant DD *“the fields are somewhat similar, but the practices are different in a way that the EAP is currently practice by anybody while OSW is specifically for social workers who are in the occupational environment”*. Another participant in agreement with this alluded *“they are closely related. However, EAP is more accommodative since it can be practiced by other professionals from other disciplines like*

psychologists and counsellors whereas occupational social work is strictly done by social workers” (Participant F).

Participant A stated that although the two fields have similar objectives, EHW is more advanced than OSW in terms of the scope of practice. Perhaps this participant was relating the difference to the variety of programmes and services as well as the ways in which these are offered.

4.4. Summary

In this chapter, a comparative account of the results that emerged from the interviews with EAP professionals and practitioners as well as OSWs was presented. Through the chosen method of analysis themes were established and demonstrated ranging from core areas of intervention, therapeutic component, registration with a statutory body and participants’ views on the research topic. Information was discovered and discussed that indicated the similarities and differences between EAP and OSW under these themes. This prepared information that would help in answering the research questions but would also determine if the goal of the study was achieved.

The researcher interpreted the thematic data while compiling different themes. Therefore, the process of analysis and interpretation was simultaneous.

The fifth and final chapter will provide a brief summary of the study objectives and the key findings of the study will be presented. The researcher will attempt to draw logical conclusions from the interpreted data and provide answers to the research questions. To conclude, the researcher will make recommendations for future research and finalise the report.

CHAPTER 5

KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 1 of this research report provided a contextual framework, rationale and the potential benefits of the research study. This was followed by a comprehensive theoretical overview of EAPs and OSW. Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of the research methodology including the data collection strategy. A detailed analysis and discussion of the empirical findings then followed in chapter 4. Through Chapter 5, the researcher will attempt to present a summary of major findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the empirical findings and analysis in the previous chapter. A comparison between OSW and EAP was researched by determining the similarities and differences between the two disciplines.

5.2. Summary of the Research

The focus of this study was to compare OSW and EAP in order to determine and identify the similarities and differences. A study in this area was deemed necessary owing to the reviewed literature that suggests that there is very little difference between the two fields as well as the knowledge gap that exists in research.

The background of this study was done by studying the literature on EAPs and OSW internationally and nationally. The background covered the historical overview and reasons for establishment, client systems and service users, core technologies and functions, scope of practice and types of services rendered, service delivery and practice models as well as the requirements for practice.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher anticipated the achievement of the following objectives:

- ❖ To conceptualise EAPs and OSW
- ❖ To explore and describe the similarities between OSW and EAP
- ❖ To explore and determine the differences between OSW and EAP.

In the same way, the research questions that guided the study were:

- ❖ What are the similarities between OSW and EAP?
- ❖ What are the differences between OSW and EAP?

The research approach that was used in this study was the qualitative research approach and the type of research was both exploratory and descriptive in nature.

The research population was the members of EAPA-SA and SAOSWA and this population was obtained from the data base of the two associations. With this in mind, the sampling method in this study was random. The number of participants in the study was 13.

Email interviews were conducted with the 13 participants using a semi-structured interview schedule. The data was then analysed and interpreted using thematic data analysis, as presented in chapter 4.

The participants in the study were employed either as EAP practitioners/professionals or as OSWs. They all possessed a qualification in social work. The participants were from Gauteng, North-West, Kwa-Zulu Natal, and the Eastern Cape.

The researcher addressed various ethical aspects such as voluntary participation and informed consent, violation of anonymity/privacy/confidentiality, compensation, actions and competence of the researcher and publication of findings.

5.3. Key Findings

This section summarises the major findings of this research and responds to both research questions.

5.3.1. Major Findings from the Literature Review

The theoretical overview on EAPs and OSW revealed the following:

- ❖ EAPs focus on prevention and treatment of psychological and social challenges that impact negatively on employee performance. OSW is also defined in terms of the human and social needs of employees as well as productivity in the workplace.
- ❖ EAPs and OSW were introduced for different reasons. EAPs were established to ensure the well-being of employees and to deal with productivity issues in the work environment. EAPs were introduced in work organisations to manage productivity by addressing challenges faced by employees; whereas OSW was established when social services became necessary in the workplace to support workers, thus in turn guaranteeing productivity. The difference lies in that productivity was not a priority in establishing OSW services in the workplace but it happened as a result of the social services. The priority was ensuring a healthier workforce.
- ❖ The client systems for EAPs and OSW are similar. Services are rendered to employees and their families as well as to the organisations.

- ❖ There are distinct similarities and differences in terms of EAP and OSW workplace functions. The similarities in this regard include, amongst others, case management and consultation with work organisations. The differences in terms of workplace functions include marketing and monitoring and evaluation. Literature indicates the marketing of EAP services including promotion of availability and guarantees to all stakeholders. Furthermore, EAPs monitor and evaluate the value, success and/or impact of EAP services that relate to the organisation and the individual's job performance. These findings indicate that EAPs work towards proving their worth in work organisation by ensuring and demonstrating a return on investment. The theory and findings from the analysis do not mention these functions in an OSW setting.
- ❖ EAPs and OSW both fulfil a generalist role in their scope of practice. They provide services to individuals and families, consultation with supervisors and managers, organisational development, training of staff and programme administration.
- ❖ OSW integrates traditional social work skills. EAPs, on the other hand, incorporate various skills and abilities from multiple professions such as psychiatry, psychology and nursing.
- ❖ Service delivery models in the EAP and OSW field both provide the context within which services can be rendered. For EAPs, service delivery models include internal, external and combination models; while OSW renders services according to the OSWPM. This model indicates the broad scope of the field of OSW and describes client systems and intervention methods used in all of the positions employed by the model.

- ❖ The team of professionals from different disciplines in the field of EAP ensure the sharing of ideas and this contributes to the broader perspectives. OSW, on the other hand, is solely guided by social work values, principles and a code of ethics.

5.3.2. Major Findings from the Empirical Data

From the analysis of data and the empirical findings presented in chapter 4, it was found that:

- ❖ Both EAPs and OSW deal with work-related, personal, interpersonal and productivity issues. The findings further indicated that the kind of employee issues that are dealt with range from substance abuse, stress, trauma, financial pressures, conflict, absenteeism, employee development and bereavement.
- ❖ The workplace functions and roles of EAP practitioners/professionals and OSWs include casework, group work and community work. Although the community work is rendered in both fields, community work in the OSW is guided by the principles of community social work, whereas the community work in the EAP field is diversified owing to the multiple professions within the field. Be that as it may, the two fields render services to the work community. The functions and programmes of OSW are guided by the OSWPM, whereas EAP functions and programmes are directed by the service delivery model employed by the respective organisation.
- ❖ The programmes and services rendered by EAP practitioners/professionals and OSWs are closely linked to their roles and functions. The findings on the programmes and services offered by EAPs were in line with the EAP scope of

practice where casework includes assessments, referrals, follow-ups and reintegration and group work and community work involves prevention, awareness and wellness programmes. Still, with the OSW programmes and services, these were guided by the OSWPM. Programmes were rendered under restorative, promotive, work-person and workplace interventions.

- ❖ The key performance indicators for EAPs and OSWs were similar in that they meant to ensure employee and organisational wellness. The KPIs are measured in terms of work done and the success of programmes run. EAPs are evaluated according to the targets reached.
- ❖ In the EAP field, the service delivery model identified was in-house. In the OSW field the services are also rendered in-house and the practice model identified was the OSWPM that takes on four positions, namely, restorative, promotive, work-person and workplace interventions. Although the interventions in the EAP field are not grouped and labelled such as in OSW, the services rendered within each intervention relate to those mentioned in the OSWPM.
- ❖ The service objectives in both fields are based on the physical and mental health of employees, work-life balance and the productivity of the workforce.
- ❖ The therapeutic approaches used in EAPs range from family therapy, person-centred, cognitive behavioural and solution-focused brief therapy. The therapeutic approaches used in OSW, on the other hand, include task-centred, strengths focused and brief therapy. The common approach used in both fields was brief therapy. All the other approaches form part of the overarching solution-focused brief therapy.

- ❖ Some participants believed the therapeutic approaches were appropriate across all cultural groups and others disagreed with this notion. The latter believed a more culturally-based approach to therapy is needed in practice because clients come from different backgrounds.
- ❖ The findings indicated that the participants did not seem to understand the distinction between statutory registration and membership with an association. They believed that a lack of registration had dire consequences and thought of this as an illegal practice. They indicated that registration and membership association ensured the protection of professionals and the profession.
- ❖ The keywords used to define OSW and EAPs were similar. These included work-based programmes, troubled employees, personal and work-related problems, productivity and job performance.
- ❖ EAPs and OSW are interrelated but have distinct features. OSW is regarded as a profession because all OSWs are trained social workers whereas EAPs employ people from different professions such as psychologists and counsellors. The members of EAPA-SA further see EAPs as more advanced than OSW in terms of the scope of practice. This is perhaps motivated by the broadness of the guidelines for EAPs as identified by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:4-26).

5.3.3. Major Findings in response to the Research Questions

The research questions served as answerable enquiries on the similarities and differences between EAPs and OSW in theory and in practice. The following table identifies and describes the similarities and differences between EAPs and OSW in response to the research questions. The contrast will be outlined from a theoretical

perspective provided by the literature review and a practical perspective obtained from the empirical findings.

Table 5.1: Theoretical Comparison between OSW and EAP

	Similarities	Differences
Theoretical Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Established to ensure employee wellbeing and to maintain productivity. -Focused on prevention and treatment of psychosocial dysfunctions that negatively affect job performance. -Client systems include employees, families and organisations. -Workplace functions include case management and consultation with managers and supervisors. -Generalist role in terms of service provision to individual, families, consultation with management, organisational development, training staff and programme administration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -EAPs established for management of productivity issues that relate to employee issues. -OSW established because of a need to support employees, in turn guaranteeing productivity. Although both fields support employees and assist organisations with productivity issues. In establishing EAPs the priority was to deal with productivity issues, whereas the priority for the establishment of OSW was to ensure a healthy workforce which in turn led to increased productivity. -Some functions performed by EAPs are not performed by OSWs such as marketing and monitoring and evaluation. -OSW integrates social work skills, whereas EAPs incorporate various skills from different professions. -EAP service delivery models include in-house, external and combination models. -OSWs are solely guided by the OSWPM as well as social work skills, values, principles and code of ethics. -Theoretically, EAPs focus specifically on performance whereas OSW services appear broader.

The above table describes the theoretical differences and similarities between OSW and EAPs. The table responds to the research questions and subsequently indicates an achievement of the research objectives. There appears to be more differences than similarities in theory. This confirms that OSW and EAP are actually distinct disciplines that share some similarities in terms of characteristics.

Table 5.2: Practical Comparison between OSW and EAP

	Similarities	Differences
Practical Perspective	<p>-Types of employee issues dealt with include stress, trauma, bereavement, substance abuse, interpersonal relations, absenteeism and productivity issues.</p> <p>-Workplace services and programmes include case management, group work and community work. Although community work in OSW is guided by social work principles and community work in EAP more diverse because of the multiple professions; both fields consider the work organisation as a community.</p> <p>-Service objectives are based on physical and mental well-being of employees, work-life balance and productivity.</p> <p>-Common therapeutic approach: Solution-focused brief therapy.</p> <p>-Disciplines defined in terms of work-based programmes offered to troubled employees that deal with personal and work-related issues to maintain and improve productivity.</p>	<p>-OSW uses the OSW practice model to render services and programmes.</p> <p>-OSW is seen as more of a profession than the EAP is. Perhaps this is owing to the fact that OSW is recognised as a specialised field.</p> <p>-EAPs comprise of multiple professions including psychology, psychiatry and nursing, whereas OSW is only limited to social workers.</p>

Table 5.2 clearly illustrates the contrast between EAPs and OSW and provides a comparative analysis in practice. The findings indicate that the OSW and EAP are more similar in practice than they are theoretically. Perhaps this explains how the two fields are usually used interchangeably in literature. The differences between the OSW and EAP are very minimal but still provide a response to the research question that seeks to describe the differences and the similarities between the two disciplines.

5.4. Recommendations

The main recommendations of this study are elicited from the theoretical overview of OSW and EAPs as well as from the analysis of the empirical findings. Additionally, in this section the researcher provides recommendations for future studies.

5.4.1. Recommendations based on Findings

In light of the reviewed literature and the analysis of the empirical findings, the researcher recommends the following:

- ❖ The reviewed literature indicates that EAPs and OSW are referred to interchangeably and are viewed as interlinked. Theory also indicates that there are certain programmes or services offered by EAPs that are not offered by OSWs. In light of the above, for the disciplines to be viewed entirely as interrelated they may need to provide similar programmes. The researcher thus recommends that OSW incorporates marketing and monitoring and evaluation and perceives it as central, as the discipline appears to overlook the importance of these functions.
- ❖ It would be difficult, if not impossible, to incorporate the OSWPM in EAP as the field consists of professionals from diverse disciplines. However, a

thorough practice model is needed in EAP, separate from the service delivery models, that guides the practice of EAPs.

- ❖ The findings indicated that the participants did not understand the difference between statutory registration and membership association. In view of this, it is recommended that the nature, roles and benefits of each be clarified for members. This will ensure that members take responsibility for their professions respectively but are also able to reap the benefits of belonging to a professional association as well as a statutory body.
- ❖ The research findings indicated that certain participants felt that the therapeutic approaches were suitable for all cultural groups whereas others disagreed with this. However, most participants still believed that a culturally-based therapeutic approach is needed. For these reasons, it is recommended that a cultural sensitivity be incorporated in the existing therapeutic models to ensure appropriateness across all cultural groups. The diversity amongst different cultural groups should be acknowledged and efforts should be put in place to ensure that all clients feel 'understood'.
- ❖ As it stands the definitions of OSW and EAP are indistinguishable. Therefore, it is recommended that definitions be made more specific in order to tell EAP apart from OSW.

5.4.2. Recommendations for Future Research

Possible areas for future research include the following:

- ❖ Future research into the similarities and differences between EAPs and OSW should include participants from both the public and private sector. The reason for this is that this research study was inadvertently limited to only

government employees, therefore the experiences of OSWs in the private sector did not form part of the empirical study. The researcher is of the view that the empirical data from OSWs in the private sector would provide more information about the contrast between the two fields across all sectors.

❖ Further studies would obviously need to be broadly based to better aid generalisation. To accomplish this, the following suggestions have been made and can be fully explored:

- I. Change in sampling method
- II. Increase in sample size
- III. Applying the quantitative approach to research as an addition

It is the view of the researcher that using snowball sampling would ensure that participants from across the disciplines are included in the study. A quantitative approach would aid descriptive data and statistical findings to this area of research. Therefore, this approach will obviously require a larger sample size.

5.5. Concluding Remarks

The aim of this study was to compare EAPs and OSW in order to determine the similarities and differences. Evidently, based on the research findings, the research questions that guided the study were answered and the objectives accomplished.

From the research findings, it can be deduced that EAPs and OSW are typically similar but still consist of some differences. A review in literature indicates that the two are used interchangeably and that the one is considered a sub-section of the other, for instance some organisations use EAPs as a sub-section of OSW.

In conclusion, the research study that focused on this area, specifically, was necessary. This research identified and described the similarities and differences between EAPs and OSW, contributed to the body of knowledge for future studies and assisted both fields in their pursuit for independence and autonomy by describing each one's unique qualities.

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ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A Comparative Study between Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work

Identifying Information

Job Title:

Number of years as a professional (i.e. Social Worker):

Number of years in EAP/OSW:

Gender:

Age:

Area:

1. Background Information

Tell me briefly about yourself, general information about your study background and your first entry into the profession. Please include your experience and perspectives on the profession.

2. Core Areas of Intervention

What kind of employee issues do you deal with?

What are your workplace roles and functions?

What programmes and services do you offer your clients?

What are your key performance indicators and how are they measured?

What are your service delivery and practice models?

What are your service objectives?

How does your geographical area influence your work (services offered, service objectives, workplace roles/functions)?

Regarding the therapeutic component:

If you are rendering therapeutic services, please specify which therapeutic approach you follow (for example, Solution-focused brief therapy)

Are you of the opinion that the current therapeutic approach applied in your workplace, is suitable for all race/cultural groups? Please motivate your answer for the above question.

Share your views on the need for a typical culturally-based therapeutic model within the EAP/OSW field:

1. Registration with a Statutory Body and/or Professional Association

In terms of registering with a statutory body and/or professional association, how do you think this influences your work?

What do you think are the consequences or challenges that one may be faced with if not registered?

2. Thoughts on Research Topic

How would you define EAP/OSW?

Are there any differences in terms of the theory learned during your studies and present practice?

Do you think that Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work are similar? Please explain

3. Additional Information

Do you have any concerns or experiences regarding this topic that I might not have addressed?

ANNEXURE B: INVITE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Dear (Participant's name)

I'm contacting you regarding your interest in my research project. First of all, I would like to thank you very much for your cooperation and your interest in participating in the study.

As briefly explained during our telephonic contact, I will be conducting an email interview with you with the purpose of comparing occupational Social Work and Employee Assistance Programmes within a South African context. There is no right or wrong answer, you are free to answer in a few sentences or long paragraphs, it is your interview and you determine how you would like to proceed.

Please find the attached informed consent and note that agreeing to participate in your response to this email will suffice the informed consent on your part. This is only done for your convenience and to ensure that you do not incur any costs in terms of scanning or faxing the document back to me.

Thank you again for your help and your time.

Kind Regards,

Tsholofelo Maseko

ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT



Informed Consent

TITLE OF THE STUDY

A comparative study between Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational
Social Work

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Tsholofelo Maseko

Tel: 0711133953

Email: tsholomodise@ymail.com

PURPOSE OF STUDY:

The purpose of the study is to compare employee assistance programmes and occupational social work and identify and determine their similarities and differences.

STUDY PROCEDURES:

The interview will take appropriately 60-120 minutes. All data collection will be scheduled according to the convenience of the participant.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

There are no known emotional risks or discomforts associated with this project, although fatigue may be experienced and/or stress when participating in the project.

BENEFITS:

There are no known direct benefits for participating in this study. However, the results of the study may help researchers gain a better understanding of the behaviours of other people.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS:

A participant may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION:

There will be no financial compensation offered for participating in the project.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

An email interview will be utilized to collect data. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve the participant's confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.
- Keeping notes and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.

Furthermore, the records will be seen by the Principal Investigator and authorised members of the research team at the University of Pretoria.

THE RESULTS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND ONLY BE REVEALED IF REQUESTED BY THE PARTICIPANT.

The results of the study may be published in professional journals or presented at professional conferences, but no records and/or identity will be revealed unless required by law.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Any questions or concerns regarding the study or adverse effects experienced by participants as a result of participating in the study can be taken up with **Tsholofelo Modise** (the researcher) at **0711133953** at any time during the day.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

I understand my rights as a researcher subject, and I voluntarily consent to participation in this study, I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form. I am also aware that all raw data generated through this study will be stored at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years for archival and possible future research.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

ANNEXURE D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Research Ethics Committee

13 April 2018

Dear Ms Modise

Project: A comparative study between Employee Assistance Programmes and Occupational Social Work in the North-West Province, South Africa
Researcher: T Modise
Supervisor: Prof LS Terblanche
Department: Social Work and Criminology
Reference number: 17261563 (GW20180309HS) (Group research)

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

I have pleasure in informing you that the Research Ethics Committee formally **approved** the above study at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 13 April 2018. 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 your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

PP.

Prof Maxi Schoeman
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate and Research Ethics
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za

cc: Prof LS Terblanche (Supervisor)
Prof A Lombard (HoD)

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof MME Schoeman (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Dr L Blokland; Dr K Booyens; Dr A-M de Beer; Ms A dos Santos; Dr R Fasselt; Ms KT Govinder; Dr E Johnson; Dr W Kelleher; Mr A Mohamed; Dr C Puttergill; Dr D Reyburn; Dr M Soer; Prof E Taljard; Prof V Thebe; Ms B Tsebe; Ms D Mokalapa

ANNEXURE E: PERMISSION LETTER FROM EAPA-SA

Brooklyn Medpark,
1148 Jan Shoba Street,
Brooklyn, Pretoria 0001
Tel: 012 346 4430
E-mail: admin@eapasa.co.za
Website: www.eapasa.co.za
P.O Box: 11167, Hatfield, Pretoria 0028
Company reg number: 201000022108



10 November 2017

ENTERPRISES UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND CRIMINOLOGY
140 LUNNON ROAD
HILLCREST, PRETORIA

Attention: Prof L.S. Terblanche

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH BY GROUP
OF MASTERS STUDENTS IN EAP FIELD.**

1. Your e-mail dated 10 October and previous communication in this regard has reference.
2. The Employee Assistance Professional Association of South Africa (herein referred to as EAPA-SA) acknowledges receipt of your request to perform research study under the envisaged title: **A Comparative Study between Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Social Work.**
3. Your request has been submitted to EAPA-SA Board of Executives for consideration and this application was successful.
4. You are hereby informed of the decision of the EAPA-SA Board to grant permission to conduct your research study using EAPA-SA members as population for your study, and that the permission has been granted conditional upon submission of the following documents to EAPA-SA before the study commence:

Ensuring excellence in Employee Assistance Programmes

Executive Committee: Mr. Tinyiko Godfrey Chabalala, Mr. Kelly Manzini,
Dr. Praveesh Bhoadram, Ms. Thiloshni Govender & Mr. Tshithiwa Mamele.

ANNEXURE F: PERMISSION LETTER FROM SAOSWA



South Africa Occupational
Social Workers Association
Unit 16
Northcliff Office Park
203 Beyers Naude Drive
Northcliff
2115
info@saoswa.co.za
www.saoswa.co.za

"YOUR SPECIALISATION PARTNER"

24 October 2017

Prof Louie Terblanche
Department of Social Work and Criminology
University of Pretoria

Dear Prof Terblanche,

AUTHORISATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT BY MASTERS EAP STUDENTS

The correspondence between SAOSWA and yourself earlier this year regarding an academic research project in 2018 by Masters EAP students of your university has reference.

We hereby confirm that we have agreed that your Masters EAP students may contact SAOSWA's National Executive Committee for purposes of this research project. The National Executive Committee will facilitate contact between your students and eight SAOSWA members as respondents in the envisaged research project.

Kind regards,

MRS ARISTA BOUWER
National Chairperson
SAOSWA National Executive Committee

ANNEXURE G: DATA STORAGE FORM



Declaration for the storage of research data and/or documents

I/We, the principal researcher(s) TSHOLOFELD CATHERINE MASeko
and supervisor(s) PROF. LOUISE TERBLANCHE
of the following study, titled A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN EMPLOYEE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES & OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK IN A SA CONTEXT
will be storing all the research data and/or documents referring to the above-mentioned study in the following
department: SOCIAL WORK & CRIMINOLOGY

We understand that the storage of the mentioned data and/or documents must be maintained for a minimum of 15 years from the commencement of this study.

Start date of study: 01 FEBRUARY 2017
Anticipated end date of study: 31 SEPTEMBER 2018
Year until which data will be stored: 2033

Name of Principal Researcher(s)	Signature	Date
TSHOLOFELD C. MASeko		03/09/2018
Name of Supervisor(s)	Signature	Date
Name of Head of Department	Signature	Date