

EXPECTATIONS, PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF EAP SERVICES IN THE SAPS

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Abstract: The objective of this research is to determine the expectations, perceptions as well as the experience the South African Police Service (SAPS) employees have regarding the Employee Assistance Services (EAS). No sampling strategy was used, with the result that all available employees (and EAS professionals as administrators) were included in the study ($N=37\ 816$). The questionnaire was designed using eight cross-cutting principles in the EAS (referred to as factors), namely (i) *information*; (ii) *support and understanding*; (iii) *accessibility*; (iv) *availability*; (v) *responsiveness*; (vi) *confidentiality*; (vii) *credibility*, and (viii) the *proactive/empowerment approach*. The measuring scale is a 5-point Likert scale. The experience was measured by isolating the responses of those employees who have used the services of the EAS in the past year. The results indicated a high *overall expectation* of the EAS regarding all eight principles (combined average of 4.5), followed by a slightly lower *overall perception* (combined average of 3.2), and a combined average of 3.5 regarding the *overall experience* of participants who have used the services of the EAS in the past year.

Key phrases: chaplains, Employee Assistance Services, productivity, social workers, South African Police Services

1 INTRODUCTION

Management has the responsibility to provide services (internal/external) to enhance the health and wellness of employees. One way of ensuring the enhancement of health and wellness in an organisation is to put Employment Assistance Programmes (EAPs) in place in the organisation (Ashford & Feldman 2012:2). EAP can become an important service in an organisation to employees to balance their work demands and personal life and it can support the employer's goals for improved levels of productivity (Jacobson & Attridge 2010:1). During the 1940s EAPs focused on providing an outreach to employees who struggled with substance abuse problems. In the past few decades employee assistance services (EAS) have grown tremendously and are now addressing more complex employee health, behavioural and work-life problems. Today the EAPs are designed to support a variety of different kinds of employees, their families and workforce performance problems. Organisations provide EAPs for multiple reasons, which range from support to employees and their families (accepting the view that a healthy employee is more productive) to offering employees assistance (Jacobson, Jones & Bowers 2011:53).

In this context the EAP is rendered by a multi-professional department, comprising of psychologists, social workers and chaplains, and referred to as EAS. According to Ollier-Malaterre (2009:44) EAS can make major contributions to organisations. It saves money because it reduces turnover, reduces absenteeism, and increases productivity of employees and the organisation as a whole. It is also a mechanism that can be used to reduce health costs. An EAS can only achieve its full potential if it is part of the organisation. It is therefore imperative that the EAS is a component of the human resource management effort in the organisation (Attridge, Amaral, Bjornson, Goplerud, Herlihy, McPherson, Paul, Routledge, Sharar, Stephenson & Teems 2010:2).

Today, more than ever, South African Police Service (SAPS) employees, their families and their communities need EAS. SAPS employees are confronted with more situations that discourage and create mental, emotional and spiritual burdens than anyone else. This burden affects not only SAPS employees, but also their families (Richard, Emener & Hutchison 2009:338). According to Archibald (1995:45), police officials are traditionally reluctant to make use of the EAS because of the profession's macho image as well as the perception that information is not treated confidentially. The use of this service is often seen as a career limiting decision. From an organisational development perspective, specifically in terms of the existence and value of the EAS in the SAPS, scientific research was mandated by SAPS management to determine the importance of EAS to the members of the SAPS.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Background

The EAS comprises *social workers, psychologists and chaplains*. The EAS is available to assist and support all the employees of the SAPS. The SAPS as an employer has institutionalised the EAS in order to provide specific assistance and support to the organisation's most valuable asset, namely its human resources. All SAPS employees and their immediate family have direct access to the EAS, 24 hours a day (SAPS 2012:1). It is not obligatory to inform anyone when an individual engages the EAS for assistance and support in personal or work-related issues.

However, an individual may be referred to the EAS by a concerned family member, a supervisor, a colleague or even a union representative (SAPS 2012:1).

2.2 Principles of the EAS

The core principles of the EAS, as defined within the broader public service (DPSA 2011:1) that is applicable to the SAPS context, are inter alia:

- Ethics and confidentiality (promoting ethical conduct and confidentiality).
- Accessibility and focus on all levels of employment eligibility (full access and capacity at all levels).
- Flexibility and adaptability (promoting customised solutions that are department, cluster and sector specific).
- Contextual difference (development thrust that is responsive to organisational circumstances).
- Performance focus (training must result in enhanced performance and service delivery).
- Learning communities and organisations (expanding access to knowledge and promoting individual responsibility for learning).

The above mentioned principles are somewhat generic and common within the EAS professionals' environment (i.e. psychologists, social workers and chaplains) (South African Council for Social Service Professions 2012:1; HPCSA 2012:1). The EAS professional who attends to SAPS employees and their immediate families has to abide by a code of ethics. The following are cross-cutting principles in the SAPS EAS (across all professions and registration categories) (Grobler & Maree 2009:28):

- Information regarding services to be available to all employees – the right to be informed.
- The EAS must render services to support all employees with a clear understanding of their situation which, in most instances, is context specific.
- Services need to be accessible to all employees, regardless of rank or status.
- The EAS must be available to employees at all times.

- The EAS must respond immediately when services are requested.
- Confidentiality regarding sensitive and personal information must be maintained at all costs.
- The EAS must behave credibly, in other words, they should lead by example and practise what they preach.
- The EAS must not only focus on the employee's problems (traditional EAP approach), but rather focus on empowering them with the necessary skills and knowledge to cope with their day-to-day demands, in other words a more proactive/empowering approach.

2.3 Spheres of the EAS

Since 2008, the EAS follows an integrated approach in rendering services. Together, the best kind of intervention for the successful resolution of personal or work-related issues for employees and their immediate families is determined. Although the EAS follows an integrated approach, specialisation exists in this professional environment (Grobler & Maree 2009:30; SAPS 2009). According to SAPS (2009) all interventions are aimed at enhancing the total wellness of the employee, which include four (4) broad spheres, namely (i) organisational interventions; (ii) interpersonal interventions, (iii) health and wellness interventions and (iv) intra-personal interventions. The range of interventions offered by the EAS involves all four of the quadrants within the following broad categories:

Proactive interventions: This is the primary focus of the EAS, aimed at the enhancement of personal coping skills, enabling individuals to cope effectively with challenges that may occur, resulting in the improvement of their quality of life. A range of *resilience interventions* focus on the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress – such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. *EAS spiritual and value-driven programmes* are aimed at empowering employees with values in order to conduct ethical policing. These interventions are aimed at creating awareness to instil a sense of collective participation in combating corruption through an intense application of ethical principles.

Devotions emphasise the spiritual empowerment of police employees to carry out their daily tasks.

Reactive interventions: Reactive interventions aim at empowering individuals who are experiencing personal challenges in life to cope effectively and to face and solve their challenges appropriately. These interventions can take the form of *therapy and counselling* which can aid in processing and healing past and present trauma or hurt.

Crisis interventions apply when the EAS professional is needed at the scene of a major incident, a suicide or attempted suicide, sudden maladjustment in the work environment, conflict situations and death. The EAS professional attempts to systematically manage these crises events that have occurred.

Organisation-centred services are provided to support the organisation and employees in police operations/activities/events/ training.

Individual assessments are made at assessment centres and employee selections. *Assessment centres* use a multifaceted or multidimensional technique, involving a series of written exercises and behavioural simulations (interactive exercises) of police and post-specific managerial tasks in which a candidate participates and on which the candidate's ability to function in the post can be assessed.

Organisational development is a two-fold process. In the first, diagnosis, needs and developmental areas are identified. This is done by means of the EAS needs analysis system, interviews, desk-top research and any other relevant information-gathering methods. The second part of the process is intervention design and the implementation of interventions that will address the issues or needs indicated in the diagnosis.

Support of SAPS human resources-related functions is professional input and consultation with regard to organisational functioning by means of the investigation and improvement of employees' health and well-being within the framework of existing human resources practices, policies and procedures.

Operational support. It is possible to mobilise crisis trauma workers in a major incident or disaster within hours of its occurrence. SAPS debriefers (EAS professionals) are deployed to, firstly, assist victims who are not in need of medical

attention at the major incident or disaster scene and, secondly, to provide support to rescue workers at the scene.

Resilience-centred services are rendered to employees and their immediate families before, during and after deployment, as well as when employees are away on training for more than two months (for example deployment internationally). These services include consultations, counselling and support, home visits and resilience preparation, as well as reintegration sessions upon the member's return from deployment.

The *forensic social workers* in the SAPS are responsible for rendering services to child victims. This involves conducting a scientific assessment of child victims, writing the relevant court reports and appearing as an expert or opinion witness in court.

Services aimed at the involvement of the communities and religious bodies include the *Action Against Crime, Transforming the City/Town/Township Interventions, and Police Appreciation Days*. These interventions are directed at religious bodies uniting in a combined effort to support and pray for the police and our cities/towns/townships.

Hosting calendar events – The EAS actively participates in celebrating special as well as religious *calendar events* such as Mother's Day and Father's Day, Easter, Christmas Carols, Deepavali, Police Appreciation Days, SAPS memorial services, World Aids Day, Casual Day, etc.

The **HIV/Aids Workplace Management** programme aims at promoting an awareness of HIV/Aids, combating and reducing the spreading of HIV/Aids and its impact, and consists of:

- The Peer Education Programme assists in reducing stigmatisation, using formal and informal platforms by advocating the prevention of HIV/Aids and promoting care and support to employees and their families.
- HIV/Aids support groups aim at facilitating optimal coping skills and encourage positive living among infected and affected employees and their families.

- HIV/Aids awareness programmes and activities enhance the present workplace programme in order to determine the impact, behavioural changes and sharing best practices.
- Spiritually driven HIV/Aids programmes, firstly, empower employees with decision-making skills based on ethical and spiritual values to combat HIV/Aids; secondly, focus on forgiveness, marriage, protection, hope and compassion; thirdly, emphasise building a strong and loving marriage that is morally accountable and that will fight the threat of HIV/Aids and, lastly, look at how the family can fight the threat of HIV/Aids.

Disability management is the integration and mainstreaming of people with disabilities in the SAPS and is managed through:

- Monitoring and evaluating services to employees with disabilities.
- Implementing the SAPS policy and other legal documents.

The following services are rendered:

- Facilitating the accessibility of buildings.
- Providing assistive devices/assistive technology, if necessary, to enhance performance.
- Reintegrating SAPS employees with disabilities into the workplace.
- Creating an awareness of all disability-related matters.
- Sensitising colleagues regarding disability.
- Empowering colleagues through sign language training so that they can communicate better with those with disabilities.
- Support groups for SAPS employees with disabilities and/or family members.

3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The management of the SAPS asked the EAS to measure police officials' expectations of the services, their perceptions as well as their experience of the services rendered to those who made use of it by conducting research regarding the services rendered by the EAS to members of the SAPS. A questionnaire was developed to explore – with regard to the EAS – the expectations, perceptions and

experience of their services to SAPS members, as many opinions, misconceptions and myths circulate within the SAPS. It was envisaged that a scientific, well-represented study would provide information concerning strategies, procedures and systems within the EAS environment.

A thorough scientific approach was adopted, as all HR decision-making processes need to be evidence based, dependent on systematic, consistent and quantifiable analysis (Fitz-Enz 2010:180). Hodgkinson and Rousseau (2009:534) also argues that academic research in organisations narrows the gap between science and practice, and it increases the likelihood of the research findings being implemented.

4 METHOD

4.2 Research design

A cross-sectional survey design (Rindfleisch, Malter, Ganesan & Moorman 2007:261) was used for the purposes of this research. This design allows for the description of the population at a specific time, and can therefore indicate the value and extent of religious participation, as well as the expectations, perceptions and experience of participants regarding the EAS (services and related issues). This design is also suited to the development and validation of questionnaires (Elmes, Kantowitz & Roediger 2012:287).

4.3 Study population

The population consisted of all SAPS employees. All available employees were identified as possible participants, subject to the geographical availability of EAS professionals as administrators. Representatives of all 9 provinces (as well as head office divisions, collectively) submitted certificates indicating that no individual, station, or grouping had been intentionally excluded from the study (Grobler & Joubert, in press). The EAS personnel establishment (as on 31 December 2008) related to the number of employees per province, is reported as a ratio in Table 1.

TABLE 1: RATIO BETWEEN EAS PERSONNEL AND SAPS EMPLOYEES PER PROVINCE

Province	SAPS employees	Number of EAS personnel	Ratio
Gauteng	34 618	156	1:222
North West	10 186	51	1:200
Free State	11 142	53	1:210
Northern Cape	7 092	47	1:151
Mpumalanga	10 108	29	1:349
Limpopo	12 525	49	1:256
KwaZulu-Natal	24 296	66	1:368
Eastern Cape	20 167	58	1:348
Western Cape	20 304	34	1:597
Head Office	25 705*	44	1:584*

** Figures reported in this table do not provide for employees of head office divisions deployed in provinces. They are counted as head office personnel, although services are rendered to them at provincial level.*

Source: Grobler & Maree (2009:33)

The information in Table 1 indicates the highest ratios in Western Cape (1:597), KwaZulu-Natal (1:368), Mpumalanga (1:349) and Eastern Cape (1:348). These ratios are even worse if one takes into account the number of employees in head office divisions (part of the 25 705) who work in provinces. A decision was made that the provincial EAS should render services to these employees, as part of their geographical responsibility. The indication overall is an uneven distribution of EAS personnel throughout the nine (9) provinces and head office.

4.4 Measuring instrument

The measuring instrument consisted of three parts, namely (i) demographics, (ii) section A (religion) and (iii) section B (EAS). All parts of the instrument were converted to a codified optical reader system. The items of the instrument were in the form of answers to multiple-choice questions on a specially developed optical reader answering sheet for easy and accurate processing. An instruction manual was circulated to all administrators (EAS functionaries) (Grobler & Joubert, in press).

The demographical part of the instrument included variables such as age, race, gender, language, marital status, type of marriage, highest qualification, rank, period in rank, number of dependants, province of origin, province stationed at, years of service and cluster station. The rationale for the inclusion of all these demographical

variables was the statistical determination of the differences in opinion, expectations, perceptions and experience of the various demographic groupings.

Section B that is relevant to this study consisted of questions related to (i) *information*; (ii) *support & understanding*, (iii) *accessibility*; (iv) *availability*; (v) *response*; (vi) *confidentiality*; (vii) *credibility*, and (viii) *proactive approach*. It consisted of 16 questions, determining three (3) dimensions namely the respondents' expectations, perceptions and experience regarding services rendered by the EAS and related issues. The participants responded to the questions on a five (5) point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – 5 where (1) completely disagree; (2) disagree to some extent; (3) unsure; (4) agree to some extent; (5) totally agree. It also included two (2) grouping variables, that is to say (i) the EAS in the immediate working environment, and (ii) when last the participant made use of the EAS.

4.5 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out by means of the Statistica program. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation (SD) skewness and kurtosis) were used to analyse the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations were used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring instrument (Clark & Watson 1995:310; Helms, Henze, Sass & Mifsud 2006: 631). Coefficient alpha conveys important information regarding the proportion of variance contained in a scale.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the differences between the sub-groups in the sample. Tukey studentised range tests were done to indicate which groups differed significantly when ANOVAS were done (Davis 2007:397). The following formula was used to determine the practical significance of difference in means between the two groups (Ravid 2010:150):

$$d = \frac{Mean_A - Mean_B}{\text{Root } MSE}$$

where

$Mean_A$ = Mean of the first group

$Mean_B$ = Mean of the second group

Root MSE = Root mean square error

A cut-off point of 0.50 (medium effect) (Wilson & Engelhard 2000:153) was set for the practical significance of differences between means. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationships between the variables. A cut-off point of 0.30 (medium effect) (Wilson & Engelhard 2000:153) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

5 RESULTS

This survey included two (2) grouping variables, that is to say (i) the EAS in the immediate working environment, and (ii) when last the participant used the services of the EAS. These results are reported in Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2: FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ON GROUPING VARIABLE 1 (EAS PERSONNEL IN WORKING ENVIRONMENT)
(N=37 816)

Section B: Question 1	Response	%
Do any EAS personnel render services within your immediate working environment?	No	23.3%
	Not aware	18.9%
	Yes	57.9%
<i>Important to note that frequencies are reported, excluding the missing values.</i>		

Source: Author

The results in Table 2 indicate that 57.9% of all participants know of EAS personnel in their immediate working environment. This can be related to the relatively high ratios as reported in Table 1.

TABLE 3: FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ON GROUPING VARIABLE 2 (RECENCY OF SERVICES RENDERED BY THE EAS)
(N=37 816)

Section B: Question 2	Response	%
When last did you use the services rendered by the EAS?	Never	54.8%
	More than a year	11.7%
	6 – 12 months	7.5%
	1 – 5 months	15.2%
	This month	10.8%
<i>Important to note that frequencies are reported excluding the missing values.</i>		

Source: Author

Table 3 reflects that of the 45.2% of all participants who had received services from the EAS, 26% were in the last year (12 months). The 54.8% who had never received any services from the EAS, corresponds with the information in Table 4, where $\pm 42\%$

of the participants do not have EAS members within reach in their working environment, or do not even know whether there are EAS personnel within the immediate environment. The mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, Cronbach alpha-coefficient as well as inter-item correlations of the three dimensions of section B of the religious survey, is reported in Table 4.

The Cronbach alpha-coefficients in Table 4 are acceptable, with the application of the guideline of $\alpha > 0.70$ (Lehman 2005:145), as well as the inter-item correlations ($0.15 < r < 0.50$, Mitchell & Jolley 2009:153). It proves that the factors have an acceptable level of internal consistency, which is the basis for an accurate analysis.

TABLE 4: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, CRONBACH ALPHA-COEFFICIENTS AND INTER-ITEM CORRELATIONS OF DIMENSIONS OF THE EAS SURVEY

Items	Dimension	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α	R
8	Expectation	4.5	0.62	-2.22	6.89	0.84	0.43
8	Perception	3.2	0.74	0.12	0.59	0.71	0.25
8*	Experience	3.5	0.70	0.01	0.61	0.70	0.24

**The same questions as with Perception but with fewer participants. Only participants who had used the services of the EAS in the past year were included in the calculation and analysis of this factor.*

Source: Author

Table 5 includes the descriptive statistics of the individual items of the questionnaire.

TABLE 5: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE INDIVIDUAL ITEMS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE (N=37 816)

Item	Expectation (Questions 1–8)			Perception (Questions 9 – 16)			Experience (Questions 9 – 16) participants who used EAS services within last year		
	Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
Information	4.3	-1.7	2.4	3.7	-0.7	-0.5	4.1	-1.2	0.9
Support and understanding	4.2	-1.4	1.4	3.2	-0.2	-1.2	3.9	-1.0	-0.1
Accessibility	4.6	-2.6	7.2	2.8	0.1	-1.2	2.8	0.1	-1.4
Availability	4.3	-1.6	2.3	3.7	-0.6	-0.3	4.1	-1.2	1.0
Response	4.4	-1.9	3.6	3.6	-0.5	-0.4	4.0	-1.0	-3
Confidentiality	4.7	-2.9	8.8	2.8	-0.1	-0.8	2.6	0.3	-1.2
Credibility	4.5	-2.1	4.5	2.8	0.1	-0.7	2.7	0.2	-1.1
Proactive	4.5	-2.1	4.4	3.4	-0.5	-0.7	4.0	-1.0	0.3
Overall	4.5	-2.2	6.9	3.2	0.1	0.6	3.5	0.1	0.6

Source: Author

The skewness and kurtosis for the *expectation* dimension exceeds the critical values of 2.00 and 7.00, respectively (Corder & Foreman 2011:62), on *accessibility* and *confidentiality*. The negative skewness values range between -2.6 and -2.9, which is an indication that the distribution has relatively few low values and tails off to the left. The kurtosis values range from 7.2 to 8.8, on *accessibility* and *confidentiality*. The *overall expectation*'s distribution scores are -2.2 and 6.9 on skewness and kurtosis respectively, indicating a very high expectation of the EAS. Due to this relatively skew *overall expectation* distribution, it is only important to report on the magnitude of it in relation to the *perception* and *experience* dimensions. The fact that the distribution is not normal, limits the probability of significant differences between the groups. The *overall expectation*, as well as the other *expectation* will not be analysed further.

All other scores on both the *perception* and *experience* dimensions are within the parameters of a normal distribution. The *overall experience* dimension is significantly higher than the perception, indicating to some extent client satisfaction, although *confidentiality* and *credibility* measured lower.

The *overall perception* dimension will be analysed by applying a one-way ANOVA test, followed by Tukey studentised range post-hoc tests to determine the statistical significant differences in this dimension. The participants with EAS personnel in their working environment, those who are not aware and those who have no EAS personnel in their working environment are compared with each other in terms of their *overall perception* rating. These results are reported in Table 6.

TABLE 6: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BY MEANS OF THE TUKEY STUDENTISED RANGE TESTS OF THE PERCEPTION DIMENSION BETWEEN EMPLOYEES WHO WORK WHERE THERE ARE EAS PERSONNEL IN THE IMMEDIATE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

EAS in working environment	No M=2.93	Not aware M=3.0	Yes M=3.44
No	-	0.0	0.0
Not aware	0.0	-	0.0
Yes	0.0	0.0	-

Marked differences are significant at $p < .05000$

Source: Author

If Table 6 is inspected, the *overall perception* mean score ranges from 3.44 (EAS personnel in the working environment), to 2.93 (no EAS personnel in the working environment). Significant differences were reported between all three categories. The interpretation of the results in this table is that the *overall perception* of participants, where EAS personnel work in their work environment, is significantly more positive than those where there are no EAS personnel (or where they are not aware of EAS employees in their work environment).

Table 7 reports on the differences in *overall perception* dimension between participants who have never used the services of the EAS, and those who have used the services within specified time intervals.

TABLE 7: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BY MEANS OF THE TUKEY STUDENTISED RANGE TESTS OF THE PERCEPTION DIMENSION BETWEEN EMPLOYEES WHO RECEIVED SERVICES FROM THE EAS

Services received	Never M=3.02	≥ year M=3.36	6 – 12 months M=3.47	1 – 5 months M=3.47	This month M=3.68
Never	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
≥ Year	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
6 – 12 months	0.0	0.0	-	*	0.0
1 – 5 months	0.0	0.0	*	-	0.0
This month	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
<i>Marked differences are significant at p < .05000</i>					

Source: Author

The results in Table 7 indicate the range of *overall perception* mean scores between groups of participants who had never received services from the EAS (3.02) to a mean score of 3.68 of the participants who have used the services of the EAS in the past month. There is a steady increase in the *overall perception* mean score, the shorter the time interval in which EAS services were used, all differences significant (at $p < .05000$). The inter-relatedness of the eight (8) factors within the *experience* dimension is reported in Table 8.

TABLE 8: CORRELATION MATRIX WITH ALL EXPERIENCE FACTORS, INCLUDING THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE DIMENSION (N=37 816)

Experience factor	Info M=4.1	Sup- M=3.9	Acces M=2.8	AvaiM =4.1	Resp M=4.0	Conf M=2.6	Cred M=2.7	Proac M=4.0	Overall M=3.5
Information	-	0.55	*	0.45	0.47	-0.03	-0.05	0.46	0.58

Support and understanding	0.55	-	0.03	0.51	0.56	-0.04	-0.08	0.54	0.63
Accessibility	*	0.03	-	*	0.03	0.46	0.46	0.04	0.53
Availability	0.45	0.51	*	-	0.63	-0.06	-0.07	0.44	0.58
Response	0.47	0.56	0.03	0.63	-	-0.05	-0.08	0.49	0.61
Confidentiality	-0.03	-0.04	0.46	-0.06	-0.05	-	0.64	*	0.50
Credibility	-0.05	-0.08	0.46	-0.07	-0.08	0.64	-	-0.04	0.47
Proactive	0.46	0.54	0.04	0.44	0.49	*	-0.04	-	0.60
Overall experience	0.58	0.63	0.53	0.58	0.61	0.50	0.47	0.60	-

Only correlations which are significant at $p < .05000$ were reported

Source: Author

The results in Table 8 indicate that all the factors measured with section B of the religious survey, are statistically related to each other, in other words, there is at least some construct validity within the *overall experience* dimension. In other words, the overall experience of the EAS, measured by these eight factors, and the score obtained with this study, is justifiable.

In the interpretation of Table 8 it is important to note that the confidentiality as well as credibility factors is negatively phrased in the questionnaire, therefore correlations with the other factors are negative, but significant. *Information* is correlated with all the factors, indicating that the availability of sufficient and accurate information is positively related in *support and understanding*, *availability*, *response*, *proactive* and the *overall experience*.

This table indicates that the participants experience the EAS as supportive and understanding when they have sufficient and accurate *information* regarding its services, that these must be *available* when needed, the *response* time in which services are rendered must be acceptable, and the EAS's approach must be *proactive* by empowering employees with the necessary skills and strategies to cope with the day-to-day demands.

Availability is related to a *response* and *proactive* approach. *Proactive* and *response* time is also positively related, which is an indication that the participants need

proactive interventions (empowerment) within a short space of time, as the need arises. This is a very important aspect which needs to be addressed by the intervention strategy.

Credibility and *confidentiality* are positively related. In other words, the EAS should do what they say, and treat confidential information as it should be treated ethically, as propagated and stipulated in the respective ethical codes. EAS personnel, who are *accessible*, are also seen as more *credible* and the services they render, *confidential*.

Table 9 reports on the overall experience levels of the participants, divided into the four (4) race groups, namely African, coloured, Indian and white.

TABLE 9: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BY MEANS OF THE TUKEY STUDENTISED RANGE TESTS OF THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE DIMENSION, BETWEEN EMPLOYEES FROM DIFFERENT RACE GROUPS

Race	African M=3.57	Coloured M=3.44	Indian M=3.38	White M=3.39
African	-	0.0	0.02	0.0
Coloured	0.0	-	*	*
Indian	0.02	*	-	*
White	0.0	*	*	-

Marked differences are significant at $p < .05000$

Source: Author

As reported in Tables 5, 8 and 9, the *overall experience* with regards to the EAS, is above average for all four of the race groups. The highest mean score in terms of the *overall experience* was with African participants (3.57), followed by coloured, white and Indian participants with means scores of 3.44, 3.39 and 3.38 respectively. A one-way ANOVA test was conducted, followed by Tukey studentised range post-hoc tests to determine the statistical significant differences between the different race groups in this dimension. The result of this analysis indicates that the African participants reported a significantly higher *overall experience* rating than the coloured, white and Indian participants.

Table 10 reports on the results of a comparative analysis, using the overall experience levels of the participants as dependant variable, with the different rank levels (SAPS Act) as independent or grouping variable.

TABLE 10: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BY MEANS OF THE TUKEY STUDENTISED RANGE TESTS OF THE EXPERIENCE DIMENSION, BETWEEN EMPLOYEES WITH DIFFERENT RANKS (SAPS ACT EMPLOYEES)

Rank	Trainee M=3.51	Const M=3.47	Sgt M=3.55	Insp M=3.60	Capt M=3.53	Supt M=3.48	Snr Supt M=3.48	Dir M=3.49	Comm M=3.7
Trainee	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Const	*	-	*	0.0	*	*	*	*	*
Sgt	*	*	-	*	*	*	*	*	*
Insp	*	0.0	*	-	*	*	*	*	*
Capt	*	*	*	*	-	*	*	*	*
Supt	*	*	*	*	*	-	*	*	*
Snr Supt	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	*	*
Dir	*		*	*	*	*	*	-	*
Comm	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-

Marked differences are significant at $p < .05000$

Source: Author

The *overall experience* with regard to the EAS, is above average for all the rank groups (SAPS Act), ranging from the highest mean score of 3.7 (commissioners) to 3.47 (constables). Results of a one-way ANOVA test, followed by Tukey studentised range post-hoc tests identified only one statistical significant difference in this dimension. The participants with the rank of inspector reported a significantly higher *overall experience* rating than the constables.

6 DISCUSSION

This empirical study into the expectations, perceptions, and experience (referred to as dimensions) of the participants in the study regarding the following eight (8) cross-cutting principles (referred to as factors) yielded scientifically acceptable results: (i) *information*; (ii) *support and understanding*; (iii) *accessibility*; (iv) *availability*; (v) *responsiveness*; (vi) *confidentiality*; (vii) *credibility*, and (viii) *proactive/empowerment approach*. The development and utility of the instrument in this study was successfully

tested, with results that are accurate, valid, reliable and justifiable. The study sample is representative of the organisation and its employees.

The EAS in terms of personnel numbers is not established in all the working environments, ($\pm 58\%$ of the participants indicated that the EAS is represented in their immediate working environment). This correlates with the fact that $\pm 45\%$ of the participants have received services from the EAS in the past 12 months ($\pm 55\%$ have never received services). These are variables (referred to in the study as grouping variables) that have an effect on the *perception* (an active process of selection, interpretation and organisation of sensory stimulation (Bergh & Theron 2009:93)), *expectation* (a person's subjective belief about the outcomes of his or her behaviour (Bergh & Theron 2009:133)) and *experience* (something that has happened to an individual (Hawkins 1994:183)) of the participants. The overall results indicate that the presence of the EAS in the immediate working environment creates a positive perception of the EAS.

The participants have very high expectations of the EAS, which can be converted into a definite need for the services of the EAS. Their perception of the EAS concerning all the factors is lower, compared to the expectation score (indicating a need for an effective communication and marketing strategy). The experience is significantly higher than the perception but lower than the expectation. All the experience factors measured above average, with confidentiality, credibility and accessibility measuring relatively lower. These are areas that could be addressed with effective communication, standardised (integrated) EAS policies, ethics and work protocol, and proper staffing (accessibility and availability). The EAS personnel, who are accessible, are also seen as more credible and the services they render, confidential.

The approach of the EAS must be proactive, by empowering employees with the necessary skills and strategies to cope with their day-to-day demands. The participants indicated that they need proactive interventions (empowerment), as the need arises. A pragmatic, flexible, nonexclusive approach is therefore needed. This needs to be addressed by the intervention strategy (included in the EAS integrated approach).

Provinces reported differences in the experience levels (indicating variance in the client satisfaction levels). These relatively low levels can be related to a high ratio of EAS personnel: SAPS employees in the province. This is specifically true for Western Cape (1:597), KwaZulu-Natal (1:368) and head office (1:584). Northern Cape, however, has the most favourable ratio (1:151), but their level of satisfaction (experience) is relatively low. This may be related to the geographic nature of the province, impacting on availability, accessibility and response time.

Differences between the experiences of the four race groups were also detected. This needs to be considered with the staffing of the EAS (as previously discussed). The difference in EAS experiences between the rank groups identified the constables are measuring the lowest. This needs to be included in the intervention strategy, with possible inclusion of needs-based interventions for the different hierarchical levels.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The foremost recommendation linked to the purpose of this study, is to communicate these results with all EAS functionaries, as well as management, including provincial management. Standardised feedback is to be provided to everybody concerned with regard to the great need for services (expectations), as well as the above-average level of client satisfaction (experience). It is also recommended that the EAS integrated approach be implemented in order to equip all EAS functionaries with the necessary skills and knowledge to render all integrated services (as well as the occupation specific or specialised services). Customised orientation and in-house training should be provided to all EAS functionaries.

This will have a positive impact on the perception as well as the experience of accessibility, availability and response time. It is further recommended that an integrated (standardised) EAS policy and work protocol be developed to be used as frameworks to address issues such as confidentiality, work processes and procedures and ethical conduct within all three professions. This should be aligned with the occupation specific codes and regulatory frameworks. This will have a positive impact on factors such as confidentiality and credibility.

The EAS should continue with the development and implementation of a needs-based, flexible and readily available (nonexclusivity) proactive intervention approach. Staffing the EAS should be considered a high priority to address the accessibility, availability and response time, and ultimately service delivery to SAPS employees. This includes the immediate filling of vacant posts and structuring the EAS on provincial and cluster station level. Accessibility may also be hampered by the nature of office accommodation. A professional and conducive environment should be established to render services. Special attention should be given to the lower ranks in terms of service delivery, especially the constables.

The results of this section of the study should be used as a benchmark for follow-up studies to track performance and improvement. A communication strategy and plan should be developed and implemented to address issues such as perceptions, misconceptions and myths regarding the EAS and its services.

8 CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of the study reported on here was to obtain information about the importance of EAP by members of the SAPS. The sample consisted of all 37 816 SAPS employees. The results obtained indicate that the EAS (better known as EAP services) is fulfilling the obligation of management to ensure the health and wellness of employees. This deduction is made as the presence of the EAS in the immediate working environment creates a positive perception of the EAS. The more recent the services rendered by the EAS, the more positive the participants' perception and level of experience (client satisfaction). There is a clear and definite need for the services of the EAS.

It is thus clear that there exist many inaccurate opinions, misconceptions and myths regarding the need as well as experience regarding the EAS and its services. The outcome of the study is that SAPS employees indicated the EAS played a significant role in their wellness. This attests to the fact that the role of the EAS in the lives of SAPS employees should never be underestimated.

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