



# The value and extent of religious participation of members of the South African Police Service (SAPS)

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The objective of this research was to determine the extent to which the employees of the South African Police Service participate in religion, and their opinion regarding the value it added to their lives. The range of religions and the various Christian denominations represented was determined. No sampling strategy was used, as all available employees were included in the study ( $N = 37\ 816$ ). The survey instrument was administered by Employee Assistance Services professionals. The results of the study indicated that religion played an important role at individual, group, organisational and community level. The majority of the participants in the study (79.4%) were Christian, 15.9% followed by African spirituality, 0.9% were Hindu, and 0.4% were Muslim. An analysis was conducted of the distribution of the religions represented within the nine provinces of South Africa (and Head Office as a collective), and across the four race groups. The Christian denominations best represented in the study were the Dutch Reformed (12.7%), Methodist (6.0%), Roman Catholic (5.8%) and Anglican (5.0%).

## Introduction

Mental health professionals and researchers agree that life stressors have an impact on a person's psychological well-being (Avey *et al.* 2010:19). However, a number of studies have shown that religion has an ameliorative effect on a variety of indicators of well-being such as mortality (Rothschild, Abdollahi & Pyszczynski 2009:816), functional impairment (Musick 1996:221), life satisfaction (Lim & Putnam 2010:914) and depression (Paukert *et al.* 2009:103).

Religion in South Africa continues to be an important social dimension. Almost the entire population professes some kind of religious affiliation, and a wide range of religions are practised in South Africa (Taylor 2010:244). The 2001 census revealed the majority of South Africans (79.8%) to be Christian. Christianity is the most common religion amongst Coloured and White South Africans (86.8%), and 79.9% of Black South Africans and 24.4% of the South African Indian population are Christian (Statistics South Africa 2001:1).

Almost 15% of the population follow no religion, and 1.4% are uncertain about their religious affiliation. Roughly 1.5% of South Africans follow Islam, 1.2% follow Hinduism, 0.3% follow African traditional beliefs, 0.2% follow Judaism and 0.6% follow other beliefs. Amongst the South African Indian or Asian population groups Hinduism has the greatest following (47.3%), followed by Islam (24.7%) (Statistics South Africa 2001:1).

The South African Police Service (SAPS) is the national police force of South Africa. There are 1116 police stations in South Africa, distributed throughout the nine provinces. A provincial commissioner is appointed in each of the nine provinces (South African Police Service 2012:1). Roughly 73.71% of the police force comprises Black South Africans, 12.92% comprises White South Africans and 10.63% comprises Coloured South Africans. Only 2.74% of the SAPS personnel are Indian. According to the SAPS PERSAP system, only 5.59% of employees have no religious affiliation.

Today, more than ever, SAPS employees, their families and their communities need religious assistance, guidance and counselling. South African Police Service employees are confronted with more situations that discourage and create mental, emotional and spiritual burdens than anyone else (Richard, Emener & Hutchison 2009:338). This burden affects not only SAPS employees, but also their families.

From an organisational development perspective, specifically in terms of the existence and value of the Spiritual Services section of the SAPS, we felt that the research reported on here, dealing with the extent of religious participation and the role and value of the chaplains employed in the Spiritual Services section of the SAPS, would be beneficial. A representative sample is needed, as limited or no information is available concerning the religious affiliation of members of the SAPS.

This information is essential to determine the most suitable employment of chaplains in terms of both religion and denomination in the SAPS as a whole, and in each province.

## Literature review

It is a fundamental tenet of all religions that individuals do not, and cannot, exist in isolation. They are dependent on and related to powers in nature and society external to them. Religion is an integral part of various aspects in a person's existence. Humans surround themselves with spiritual references, creating a context in which the sanctified is called upon to express the significance of major life events such as birth, marriages and weekly religious meetings (Hood, Hill & Spilka 2009:1).

This is why employees of the SAPS, as human beings, to a large extent experience the need for a religious affiliation. This religious affiliation expresses itself within a particular congregation (church), temple, mosque, or place of worship or of religious pursuit. Sections 9(2), 15 and 31 of the Constitution of South Africa (South Africa. Constitution of South Africa 1996) provide for citizens to have freedom of expression and association with regard to their religious beliefs. The Constitution further states that these religious activities may be carried out at government institutions, subject to certain conditions.

There are many facets to every person, and every person must be equipped physically, socially, psychologically and spiritually to be a complete human being (Pargament & Sweeney 2011:58). Only when SAPS employees are able to function as complete human beings can they be happy and productive.

South African Police Service employees are experiencing problems such as stress and anxiety-related illnesses, resulting in deaths, medical boarding and suicides. In an endeavour to rectify the situation, the SAPS introduced the Chaplain Services (Mofamere 2003:65).

The services of chaplains (field workers) date back centuries. The title *chaplain* has been used internationally since the Reformation to describe the office of a spiritual worker ministering within the armed forces. In South Africa chaplaincy can be traced back to 1652, when ministry was rendered to the Settlers. In 1703 the Church identified the need for a permanent ministry at the Castle in Cape Town. On their arrival in Cape Town in 1795, the British troops were accompanied by a full-time chaplain. In the 1960s the South African Police introduced its own chaplaincy to offer spiritual care to its members (SANDF 2004:3). Chaplains are church ministers who are appointed to this position by the state to minister to SAPS employees. The spiritual support offered relates to the SAPS employees as human beings and is intended to reinforce spiritual strength and courage to enable employees to cope with the demanding day-to-day tasks involved in dealing with crime. A secondary role of the chaplain is to mobilise religious groupings to fight against

crime. Religious groupings need to engage in spiritual activity by praying against crime and for the SAPS employees, support SAPS employees by supplying information, and become involved in community police forums and even in voluntary work, if possible and permissible. In the SAPS a church qualifies for 1 chaplain for every 1000 members (Mofamere 2003:20).

Currently Spiritual Services has as its vision 'The spiritual empowerment of SAPS employees: Towards ethical policing', and as its mission:

(1) to minister to employees spiritually and equip them with spiritual values; (2) to accompany and motivate employees in emergency or crisis situations; (3) to enhance the spiritual strength of employees; and (4) to present value-driven programmes with the aim of living according to an ethical code in the SAPS and the community. (Cofchrist 2009:1)

South African Police Service employees are in their private capacity also members of various churches or faiths; the chaplains do not take over the role of the local ministers or spiritual leaders, but are an extension of the ministry of the churches or faiths. Chaplains differ from ministers or spiritual leaders in the following ways, (1) chaplains act in a pluralistic setting, serving many people who are not part of their faith group (2) the ministry of the chaplains is unique because it takes place in an ecumenical setting; they care for the entire religious community, provide a climate for growth regardless of doctrine and encourage moral responsibility (3) chaplains must be aware of the approach taken by institutions when formulating policies to ensure that structures do not dehumanise people within their institution (4) chaplains are concerned about the welfare of all the members they serve and support SAPS members during crises in their lives (5) chaplains operate in a changing environment, as the body of members whom they serve changes constantly (6) chaplains may carry out tasks that are not religious in focus, but may be viewed as contributing to the building of character or human growth (Cofchrist 2009:1).

In this regard, Lt Gen T.T. Matanzima, Chief of Corporate Staff of the SANDF, wrote:

Thirdly, on Ministry by Presence: Chaplains are with us everywhere, supporting us in the workplace, at home and in hospitals. We see them conducting religious services in the department, at funerals, at parades, solemnizing marriages, etc. They contribute widely in the life of this organization. (SANDF 2004:1)

Therefore, the role of a chaplain should not be seen as merely another job, but as a calling from the Almighty, associated with enormous responsibilities, and which ensures and caters for the spiritual well-being of SAPS employees.

As reference is made in this study to a number of religions, we would like at this point to offer a brief summary of each of those represented in the study.

The *African religions* share certain characteristics, including a reverence for an ultimate God. Ancestors are very important

in these religions. Adherents of the African religions believe that each individual is created out of several different 'souls'. These ancestors are not removed from the world, but continue to be part of and related to the ongoing family, until they are removed by succeeding generations (Bowker 1997:1).

*Atheists* believe that nothing exists beyond or transcends the physical universe, and they find no positive evidence of God's existence (McGarth 2004:220).

*Bahaism* is a monotheistic religion founded in nineteenth century Persia. Adherents of Bahaism believe that God can be made known to humanity through signs. They believe in world peace, the unity of all religions, universal education and the equality of men and women. They advocate an international government with an international language and emphasise a simple lifestyle and service to the suffering (Kang 2011:51).

*Buddhism* is founded on the person and teachings of Buddha, who expressed his message of salvation in India over two millennia ago. A belief fundamental to Buddhism is reincarnation, or the idea that after a person dies, he or she will be born again. Buddhists strive to attain Nirvana, a state of release and freedom from suffering, after endeavouring through many cycles of life, death and rebirth to discard all attachment to desire and the self (Solihu 2009:152).

The religion with the largest number of adherents is Christianity, whose followers number approximately a third of the world's population. Christianity is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who lived approximately 2000 years ago. Christians believe that Jesus was crucified for their sins, and that he was buried and rose again on the third day following the crucifixion (Solihu 2009:157).

The third largest religion is Hinduism. It is the oldest religion in the world, and consists of a collection of religious, cultural and philosophical practices and ideas. Hinduism originated in India. It is characterised by belief in reincarnation and the law of cause and effect (karma), the desire for liberation from the cycle of birth and death, and a striving to follow the path of righteousness (Coomaraswamy 2011:3).

Approximately 23% of the population in the world follow Islam. Followers of Islam (Muslims) believe that there is only one God, whom they call 'Allah'. They appreciate both Moses and Jesus as bearers of God's message, and revere Mohammed as a prophet and holy man. Followers of Islam believe that pleasing Allah will result in a good life both on earth and after death. Reverence for Allah is demonstrated through, (1) believing in no God but Allah (2) praying five times a day facing towards Mecca (3) charity to the poor (4) making a pilgrimage to Mecca and (5) fasting during the day during the holy month of Ramadan. Muslims consider themselves forbidden by Allah to eat pork and drink alcohol (Larsson & Racijs 2010:350).

The followers of *Judaism* believe that there is one God, who created the universe, and with whom every Jew can have a personal and individual relationship. They believe that God influences everything that people do and that He continues to work on earth. Jews believe their relationship with God to be a covenant relationship: in exchange for God's blessing, they undertake to keep God's laws and seek to bring holiness into all aspects of their lives (Silber 2010:471).

Followers of *Scientology* believe that a person is a spiritual and immortal being composed of three parts, namely (1) spirit, (2) the mind and (3) the body. Of these three parts, the most important is the spirit. No one is asked to accept any belief or faith. What is true for any individual is what he or she has observed to be true. Scientology states that the primary command in life is to survive. The arc triangle is of great importance to Scientology, and represents the component's affinity, reality and communication, with the aim of assisting with relationships. Scientologists also believe in reincarnation and the lessons that can be learnt through previous lives. It is believed that these experiences can influence the spirit either positively or negatively (Reitman 2011:xiii).

The spiritual dimension of the SAPS employees is cared for, to a large extent, by religious denominations within various congregations, churches, temples, mosques and places of worship. However, employees' own ministers or religious advisors, although trained in the ministry, are not necessarily familiar with the particular problems and challenges SAPS employees face. In such cases, a chaplain is able to listen with empathy, and calmly offer advice and assistance when such assistance is appropriate.

## Purpose of the study

The management of the SAPS asked the Spiritual Services section to conduct research regarding the different religions practised by members of the SAPS (Grobler & Maree 2009:3). A questionnaire was developed to explore, with regard to Spiritual Services and chaplains (or religious leaders), the expectations, perceptions and experience of services of 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 Spiritual Services environment.

## Method

### Research design

A cross-sectional survey design (Rindfleisch *et al.* 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 Spiritual Services section (services and related issues). This design is also suited to the development and validation of questionnaires (Elmes, Kantowitz & Roediger 2012:287).

## Study population

The population consisted of all SAPS employees. All available employees were identified as possible participants, subject to the geographical availability of the Spiritual Services professionals as administrators, with the assistance of the social workers and psychologists (collectively referred to as the Employee Assistance Services or EAS) (Grobler & Maree 2009:3). Representatives of all nine provinces (as well as Head Office divisions, collectively) submitted certificates indicating that no individual, station, or religious grouping had been intentionally excluded from the study (Grobler & Maree 2009:3). These representatives also indicated that they were not aware of any circumstances that would have prevented a specific religious grouping from participating in the study.

The information in Table 1 indicates good representation in terms of race, rank and age groups, as well as years' service in the SAPS.

Table 2 gives an indication of the provincial distribution of the participants, including Head Office divisions (collectively).

Table 2 indicates that the provinces that were the best represented in terms of a percentage of the total number of participants are KwaZulu-Natal (24.1%), Limpopo (12.4%) and Gauteng (10.8%). The provinces least well represented were North West (3.8%), the Free State (4.3%) and the Western Cape (6.1%). In all, 6005 Head Office employees participated in the study; this represents 15.9% of the overall number of participants.

Table 3 represents the number of participants expressed as a percentage of the provincial personnel establishment.

Table 3 indicates that the provinces with the highest representation in terms of the number of participants as a percentage of the personnel establishment were the Northern Cape (44.5%), KwaZulu-Natal (37.6%), and Limpopo (37.4%). The provinces with the lowest representation as a percentage of the entire personnel establishment were the Western Cape (11.4%), followed by the Eastern Cape and Gauteng (11.8%). Head Office employees who participated in the study represented 23.4% of the Head Office establishment, although some were stationed in provinces.

Table 4 reports the ratio of chaplains to the personnel establishment per province.

The information in Table 4 indicates an uneven distribution of Spiritual Services personnel throughout the nine provinces and Head Office. The least satisfactory ratios were noted in the Western Cape (1:2030), KwaZulu-Natal (1:1215), the Eastern Cape (1:1061) and Limpopo (1:895). These ratios are even more sobering if one takes into account the number of employees in Head Office divisions (part of the 25 705) who work in the provinces. It was decided that the Provincial Spiritual Services should render services to these employees as part of their geographical responsibility.

**TABLE 1:** Characteristics of the participants.

Item	Category	% of participants in this study	SAPS population (if available)
Age	18–25 years	8.8	-
	26–35 years	39.7	-
	36–49 years	43.5	-
	50–60 years	7.7	-
	61 years and older	0.3	-
Race	Black	65.4	71.9
	Coloured	13.1	10.6
	Indian	2.5	2.8
	White	18.2	14.4
Marital status	Divorced	5.5	-
	Separated	1.1	-
	Single	36.5	-
	Widowed	1.7	-
	Living together	3.5	-
	Married	50.6	-
Appointment Act	SAPS Act	63.0	-
	PSA	23.7	-
Rank (SAPS Act members)	SAPS trainee	7.6	-
	Constable	22.2	-
	Sergeant	5.1	-
	Inspector	22.7	-
	Captain	8.2	-
	Superintendent	3.3	-
	Senior Superintendent	1.2	-
	Director	0.3	-
	Commissioner	0.08	-
Years' service in the SAPS	Less than 1 year	8.8	-
	1–5 years	29.5	-
	6–12 years	16.8	-
	13–20 years	25.0	-
	≥ 21 years	17.53	-

SAPS, South African Police Service; PSA, Public service Act personnel. Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  $N = 37\ 816$ .

**TABLE 2:** Provincial distribution of the participants.

Province	%	<i>n</i>
Eastern Cape	6.8	2374
Free State	4.3	1630
Gauteng	10.8	4078
KwaZulu-Natal	24.1	9132
Limpopo	12.4	4683
Mpumalanga	6.5	2473
North West	3.8	1441
Northern Cape	8.3	3154
Western Cape	6.1	2309
Head Office	15.9	6005

The frequencies reported exclude the missing values. *n*, number.  $N = 37\ 816$ .

**TABLE 3:** Provincial distribution of the participants expressed as a percentage of the provincial establishment.

Province	SAPS employees	Number of participants	% included in study
Eastern Cape	20 167	2374	11.8
Free State	11 142	1630	14.6
Gauteng	34 618	4078	11.8
KwaZulu-Natal	24 296	9132	37.6
Limpopo	12 525	4683	37.4
Mpumalanga	10 108	2473	24.5
North West	10 186	1441	14.2
Northern Cape	7092	3154	44.5
Western Cape	20 304	2309	11.4
Head Office	25 705†	6005	23.4†

SAPS, South African Police Service. †, Figures reported in this table do not reflect employees of Head Office divisions deployed in provinces. They are counted as Head Office personnel, although services are rendered to them at provincial level.  $N = 37\ 816$ .

## Measuring instrument

The measuring instrument consisted of two parts, namely (1) demographics and (2) Section A (religion) (Grobler & Maree 2009:6). Both 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 & Maree 2009:7).

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

Section A consisted of 40 questions, measuring the respondents' opinions and perceptions regarding their participation in religious activities. The questions tested opinions concerning Spiritual Services in the SAPS; religious beliefs; participation in religious activities; the value and contribution of religion to the individual, the community and the fight against crime; and finally information about the religious denomination or grouping to which the participant belonged. The answering scale ranged from yes, not sure to no, and also comprised specific checklist options. The breakdown (and coding system) of all the cluster stations and the 177 Christian denominations were distributed to all administrators (EAS functionaries) (Grobler & Maree 2009:7).

## Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out by means of the Statistica, a statistical program. Descriptive statistics (means, 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 *et al.* 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 Studentized 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:

$$d = \frac{Mean_A - Mean_B}{\text{Root MSE}} \quad [\text{Eqn 1}]$$

**TABLE 4:** Ratio of chaplains to South African Police Service employees per province.

Province	SAPS employees	Number of chaplains	Ratio
Eastern Cape	20 167	19	1:1061
Free State	11 142	21	1:531
Gauteng	34 618	47	1:737
KwaZulu-Natal	24 296	20	1:1215
Limpopo	12 525	14	1:895
Mpumalanga	10 108	14	1:722
North West	10 186	17	1:599
Northern Cape	7092	18	1:394
Western Cape	20 304	10	1:2030
Head Office	25 705†	31	1:829†

Source: Grobler, A. & Maree, C., 2009, 'The value and extent of religious participation of the South African Police Service's employees; Expectations, perceptions and experience of the South African Police Service's employees regarding the Employee Assistance Services (EAS)', unpublished report presented to the SAPS Management, Pretoria, April 2009  
SAPS, South African Police Service.

†, Figures reported in this table do not include employees of Head Office divisions deployed in provinces. They are counted as Head Office personnel, although services are rendered to them at provincial level.

Where:

$Mean_A$  = Mean of the first group

$Mean_B$  = Mean of the second group

Root MSE = Root mean square error. (Ravid 2010:150)

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.

## Results

The results of all 40 questions were analysed, but only those relating to the mandatory instruction by Divisional Commissioner Phahlane, are reported. The detailed information will be used to enhance the occupation-specific environment of the Spiritual Services section.

Table 5 reports both the overall and provincial distribution of religious beliefs.

According to the information reported in Table 5, the majority of participants were Christian (79.4%), followed by adherents of African religions (15.9%). The relatively low percentage reported in the 'Other' category (3.2%) is an indication that the range of religious beliefs represented was comprehensive. Given the representativeness of the sample ( $N = 37\ 816$ ), it is possible to make the following assumption regarding overall membership of a specific religious belief: For every 1% representation in the study, the membership is 1800 (SAPS total personnel establishment is  $\pm 180\ 000$ ). In other words, the Christian, African, Hindu and Islamic faiths were probably represented by  $\pm 142\ 920$ ;  $28\ 620$ ;  $1620$  and  $720$  members respectively. The other religious beliefs were probably each represented by fewer than 500 members.

The racial distribution of religious beliefs is reported in Table 6.

**TABLE 5:** Overall and provincial distribution of religious beliefs.

Religion	G (%)	NW (%)	FS (%)	NC (%)	M (%)	L (%)	KZN (%)	EC (%)	WC (%)	HO (%)	Total (%)
African	22.2	16.2	19.3	12.6	18.9	18.7	18	17	8.8	12.5	15.9
Atheism	0.1	0	0.04	0.07	0	0	0.04	0.2	0.02	0.06	0.05
Bahaism	0	0	0.04	0	0.1	0	0.04	0	0	0	0.01
Buddhism	0.03	0	0	0	0	0	0.04	0	0.02	0.17	0.04
Christianity	72.9	81.1	78.2	85.4	79.1	79.5	74.3	80.3	88.4	78.3	79.4
Hinduism	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.13	0.4	0.3	4.7	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.9
Islam	0.3	0.2	0.08	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.4
Judaism	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0.08	0.2	0	0.06	0.07
Scientology	0.3	0.09	0.11	0.07	0	0	0	0	0.02	0.06	0.08
Other	3.1	2.0	2.0	1.4	1.3	1.3	2.3	2	1.6	7.7	3.2

G, Gauteng; NW, North West; FS, Free State; M, Mpumalanga; L, Limpopo; KZN, KwaZulu-Natal; EC, Eastern Cape; WC, Western Cape; HO, Head Office. Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

Table 6 shows the Christian faith to have the majority representation, at 93.8%, 92.3%, 72.7% and 45.8% of the White, Coloured, Black and Indian participants respectively. The only significant differences compared with the other demographic variables are Hinduism (40.9%) and Islam (6.6%) amongst the Indian participants, and the African religions (22.9%) amongst the Black participants.

Table 7 reports the distribution of denominations within the Christian faith with a representation of 1% or more.

Table 7 reports that it was possible to record and analyse the denominations to which the 27 231 Christian participants in the study belonged. The denominations with the highest representation were the Dutch Reformed Church (12.7%), Methodist Church (6.0%), Roman Catholic Church (5.8%) and Anglican Church (5.0%). The related variant denominations were clustered for easy reference and analysis. Given the representativeness of the sample (N = 37 816), it is possible to make accurate assumptions and generalisations in terms of the probability of membership of a specific denomination. It is therefore possible to assume regarding overall membership of a specific denomination, that for every 1% representation in the study, the membership is 1429 (the total number of employees belonging to the Christian faith is 142 920, out of the total SAPS personnel establishment of ± 180 000). In other words, the Dutch Reformed Church, Methodist Church, Roman Catholic Church and Anglican Church were probably represented by 18 148; 8537; 8253 and 7115 members respectively.

The importance of religion at individual level, on a four-point scale, is reported in Table 8.

The results in Table 8 indicate that the majority of participants (89.7%) felt that religion (in general) was very important to them (at individual level), whilst less than 1% felt that religion was not important.

The importance of religion in the lives of SAPS employees, on a three-point scale, is reported in Table 9.

The results in Table 9 indicate that 60.5% of respondents felt that religion plays a role in the lives of SAPS members,

**TABLE 6:** Racial distribution of religious beliefs.

Religion	Black (%)	Coloured (%)	Indian (%)	White (%)	Total (%)
African	22.9	4.6	3.4	3.5	15.9
Atheism	0.03	0	0.02	0.1	0.05
Bahaism	0.02	0	0	0	0.01
Buddhism	0.03	0.03	0.2	0.06	0.04
Christianity	72.7	92.3	45.8	93.8	79.4
Hinduism	0.2	0.09	40.9	0.06	0.9
Islam	0.1	0.4	6.6	0.08	0.4
Judaism	0.08	0.03	0.2	0.04	0.07
Scientology	0.1	0.06	0	0.04	0.08
Other	3.8	1.5	2.7	2.4	3.2

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

**TABLE 7:** Distribution based on Christian denomination.

Denomination	%
Dutch Reformed Church	12.7
Other	6.2
Methodist Church	6.0
Roman Catholic Church	5.8
Anglican Church	5.0
Apostolic Faith Mission	4.2
Zion Christian Church (ZCC)	4.2
Uniting Reformed Church of SA	3.5
Lutheran Church	2.3
No church	2.2
Zion Church	1.9
African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME)	1.7
Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika	1.7
Old Apostolic Church of SA	1.4
African Catholic Church	1.4
Full Gospel Church	1.4
Assemblies of God	1.3
New Apostolic Church	1.2
Dutch Reformed Church in Africa	1.2
United Congregational Church in SA (UCCSA)	1.1
Baptist Union	1.1
Zion Christian Church (St Enganas)	1.0

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 27 231.

**TABLE 8:** Importance of religion at individual level.

Section A	Response	%
Question 24: In your opinion, how important is <i>your</i> religion?	I do not know	2.2
	Not important	0.89
	Slightly important	4.5
	Very important	89.7

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

with 13% feeling that religion did not play an important role. The difference in interpreting the previous related tables is the fact that participants were comfortable expressing their opinion about their own religion, but not comfortable about expressing their opinion about the importance of religion in the lives of others.

Table 10 reports the role played by religion in motivation in the workplace, measured on a three-point scale.

The results in Table 10 indicate that 59.1% of respondents felt their involvement in religion to be a motivational factor in the workplace. Only 13.9% felt that it played no role.

Table 11 reports the impact of religion on work performance, measured on a three-point scale.

The results in Table 11 indicate that only 7.0% of the participants responded in the negative to this question, stating that their involvement in religion had no impact on their work performance. Seventy-seven percent were of the opinion that their involvement in religion had a positive impact on their work performance.

The effect of a devotional session at the workplace, measured on a three-point scale, is reported in Table 12.

The results in Table 12 indicate that only 4.1% of the participants felt that attending a devotional session did not necessarily contribute to a sense of well-being.

Table 13 reports the value of the role of religion in personal wellness, measured on a three-point scale.

Table 13 clearly indicates that the overwhelming majority (90.0%) of participants considered that religion made an important contribution to their personal wellness.

Religious tolerance in the workplace, measured on a three-point scale, is reported in Table 14.

Table 14 indicates that a very small percentage of participants, 15.6%, experienced their workplace as intolerant with regard to religion in general.

Table 15 reports the differences in opinion amongst the religious groupings represented concerning religious tolerance in the workplace.

The religion to experience the least religious tolerance in the workplace was Bahaism (1.86), followed by Judaism and Islam, with 2.00 and 2.17 respectively. The religious grouping that experienced the greatest religious tolerance was Scientology (2.58), followed by Christianity and Atheism, with 2.42 and 2.37 respectively. A one-way analysis or variance was conducted on the dataset to determine the significant differences between the groups. The rationale

**TABLE 9:** Importance of religion in the lives of SAPS employees.

Section A	Response	%
Question 36: Do you see any role religion plays in <i>SAPS employees'</i> lives?	No	13.5
	Not sure	22.5
	Yes	60.5

SAPS, South African Police Service.  
Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

**TABLE 10:** Motivational value of the role of religion in the workplace.

Section A	Response	%
Question 27: Is your religious role a motivation in the workplace?	No	13.9
	Not sure	21.0
	Yes	59.1

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

**TABLE 11:** Impact of religion on work performance.

Section A	Response	%
Question 53: Does your involvement in religion enhance your work performance?	No	7.0
	Not sure	13.1
	Yes	77.0

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

**TABLE 12:** The effect a devotional session has on an individual in the workplace.

Section A	Response	%
Question 45: Do you feel good when a devotional session is held at your workplace?	No	4.1
	Never attended	21.2
	Yes	70.0

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

**TABLE 13:** Value of religion in personal wellness.

Section A	Response	%
Question 51: Does religion play an important role in your wellness?	No	2.0
	Not sure	5.4
	Yes	90.0

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

**TABLE 14:** Religious tolerance in the workplace.

Section A	Response	%
Question 34: Is there religious tolerance at your workplace/station/unit?	No	15.6
	Not sure	26.2
	Yes	54.0

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

for this was to determine the significance of the differences, as mean score comparisons are affected by the unequal representation of the groups.

The majority group Christians (see Tables 5 and 12) reported a significantly higher score on religious tolerance than the African, Hindu, Islam and the other religious groupings.

The participants' opinions regarding partnerships with external religious bodies, firstly to enhance their spiritual lives, and secondly in the fight against crime, are reported in Tables 16 and 17.

**TABLE 15:** Difference in opinion regarding religious tolerance amongst the various religious groupings.

Religion	African M = 2.26	Atheism M = 2.37	Bahaism M = 1.86	Buddhism M = 2.29	Christianity M = 2.42	Hinduism M = 2.25	Islam M = 2.17	Judaism M = 2.00	Scientology M = 2.58	Other M = 2.30
African	**	**	**	**	0.00	**	**	**	**	**
Atheism	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Bahaism	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Buddhism	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Christianity	0.00	**	**	**	**	0.00	0.00	**	**	0.00
Hinduism	**	**	**	**	0.00	**	**	**	**	**
Islam	**	**	**	**	0.00	**	**	**	**	**
Judaism	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Scientology	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Other	**	**	**	**	0.00	**	**	**	**	**

M, the median (the numerical value separating the higher half of the sample from the lower half) on a 5-point Likert Scale, with 1 measuring low and 5 measuring high.  
N = 37 816.

\*\*, Indicates a non-significance in a group while the 0.00 indicates a significant difference.

The importance of support from religious leaders in the workplace, measured on a five-point scale, is reported in Table 16.

The results in Table 16 indicate that the majority of participants (73.9%) were of the opinion that the involvement of religious leaders in the workplace would contribute to employee support, whilst 7.3% thought that it would not add value.

Table 17 reports on opinions regarding the value added by religious leaders to the fight against crime, measured on a three-point scale.

The overwhelming majority of participants (87%) felt that religious leaders had a role to play in the fight against crime.

## Discussion

South African Police Service employees felt strongly that religion was very important to them as individuals; only 1% indicated that religion was not important. This further indicated that religion was considered important by the followers of a wide range of religions, and not merely by members of a single religious grouping.

The majority of participants also viewed religion as important in the lives of SAPS employees. The fact that the percentage of participants to express this view was not as high as in the previous table may indicate that participants were hesitant to express an opinion about other people's lives, but felt comfortable about expressing an opinion about their own. Taking the above into consideration, it was unsurprising therefore, that the majority of participants indicated that religion played a motivational role in the workplace. The fact that participants indicated that their religion was a motivation in the workplace contributed positively to the view that involvement in religion enhanced their work performance.

The results of this study indicate that should the employees of the SAPS be actively and positively involved in religious activities, the spiritual dimension of these employees as human beings would be enhanced, further contributing to their motivation and commitment. Obviously, this would

**TABLE 16:** Importance of support from religious leaders.

Section A	Response	%
Question 31: In your opinion, do you think your religious leader can enhance employee support in your particular workplace/ station/unit/division?	Completely disagree	3.1
	Disagree to some extent	4.2
	Unsure	19.0
	Agree	43.6
	Fully agree	30.3

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

**TABLE 17:** Value of religious leaders in the fight against crime.

Section A	Response	%
Question 39: Do you think religious leaders can assist in the fight against crime?	No	3.6
	Not sure	9.5
	Yes	87

Frequencies reported exclude the missing values.  
N = 37 816.

contribute to more effective and efficient work production and even harmony in the workplace. Even religious stimulation in the workplace contributes to this positive reaction. The majority of participants indicated that a devotional session held at the workplace contributed to a sense of wellness.

The most important outcome of the study was the overwhelming indication by participants that religion played an important part in their wellness. This statistical evidence shows that religion plays a definitive role in the individual's workplace experience as holistic being, including existential aspects such as motivation, personal well-being and productivity. This attests to the fact that the role of the chaplain in the lives of SAPS employees should not be underestimated.

The majority of the participants indicated that religious tolerance was experienced in the workplace, and only a small percentage of participants indicated that they experienced religious intolerance in the workplace. This situation could be rectified through good communication and mutual respect, facilitated by the chaplains and the EAS (by means of the integrated EAS approach during large-scale interventions, such as diversity interventions).

The majority of employees were Christian (79.4%). This is supported by the statistics emanating from the 2001 census in South Africa, as participants proved to be representative of



the South African community at large (Statistics South Africa 2001:1). The fact that only 3.2% indicated that they belonged to 'other' religions showed that most religious beliefs were represented in the study.

In terms of the racial distribution of religious beliefs, the majority of employees in all four race groups indicated that they were Christian. Amongst the Indians the percentage of Christians was lower than amongst the other races, and the percentage of Hindus and Muslims was higher. Amongst the Black participants, the percentage belonging to African religions was higher than amongst other races.

The distribution of Christian denominations was confirmed by the statistics emanating from the 2001 census in South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2001:1). Participants were given a list of 177 denominations from which to choose for the purposes of the study, and all 177 were marked. A list of denominations not indicated in the addendum was submitted in the feedback, which contributes to the relatively low number of participants who indicated that they belonged to 'other' denominations. Only denominations within the Christian faith with a representation of 1% or more were listed.

The participants were of the opinion that religious leaders do indeed have a positive role to play in enhancing support to employees and the fight against crime. The involvement of religious communities within the activities of the SAPS should therefore not be underestimated or neglected.

The interpretation of the results of the study as contained in this report provides a clear indication that religion is very important to SAPS employees as human beings. This is consonant with the view of Lapierre (1994:155) that within human beings there is a vacuum that can only be filled to satisfaction by a supreme being.

It is also clear that an employee whose religious needs are met will be more effective and productive in the workplace. The place of worship to which employees go for this purpose can meet this need to a certain extent, but of greater importance is the contribution that chaplains make to the religious well-being of employees. This is also confirmed by the positive outcome that a devotional session, for instance, has on employees at the workplace.

Furthermore, the role of chaplains, as stated by Lt Gen. T.T. Matanzima of the SANDF, is confirmed in the survey, as well as employees' need to fill the religious 'vacuum'. This 'vacuum' is definitely filled, in his words, by 'the ministry by presence' of chaplains.

Taking all these factors into consideration, it is possible to state with confidence that it is extremely important for the SAPS as an employer to ensure that employees are spiritually cared for and healthy, as this will enhance effective and efficient service delivery.

## Recommendations

The foremost recommendation linked to the purpose of this study is that all SAPS employees be allowed to actively participate in the religion of their choice. This will have an effect at individual, group, organisational and community level. Religious participation should be encouraged at two levels, namely (1) internally, by the SAPS chaplains as part of the EAS integrated approach and (2) externally, by religious communities and leaders. Internal services (chaplaincy) should be enhanced through occupation-specific services, such as devotional sessions, hospital visits and support to the families of deceased members. External services (rendered by religious communities and leaders) should be enhanced through partnerships to assist the SAPS in the fight against crime and to provide extended religious support to SAPS employees as members of their specific religious community. Religious tolerance must be encouraged by means of the EAS integrated approach, firstly by means of diversity interventions (with religion as a variable), and secondly by means of sensitising all EAS functionaries to the various religious beliefs. A less extensive version of this study should be repeated at fixed intervals (e.g. every two years), so as to gather current information.

## Conclusion

The main aim of the study reported on here was to obtain information about the various religions observed by members of the SAPS. The sample consisted of all 37 816 SAPS employees.

The results obtained indicate that religion plays a role on the individual level in motivation in the workplace, enhancing work performance and personal wellness. This has the potential to result in more effective and efficient work production and greater harmony in the workplace. Religious stimulation in the workplace could also make a positive contribution in this regard: the majority of participants indicated that a devotional session held at the workplace induced a sense of well-being.

The outcome of the study is that the SAPS employees indicated that religion played an important role in their wellness. This attests to the fact that the role of the chaplain in the lives of SAPS employees should never be underestimated.

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## Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

## Authors' contributions

A.G. (University of South Africa) collected the data, analysed the data and wrote the report. Y.J. (University of South Africa) conducted the literature review and wrote the report.

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