



Employee value proposition as a tool for promoting affective commitment and intention-to-serve among traffic officers

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Orientation: Traffic officers fulfil a vital role in reducing road accidents and preventing road deaths. The commitment of traffic officers to meeting the expectations of both government and the public in these respects is vital.

Research purpose: The purpose of the study was to explore how an employee value proposition (EVP) affects commitment and the intention-to-serve among traffic officers – the focus of this study being traffic officers deployed in the province of the Eastern Cape (EC), South Africa.

Motivation for the study: From a human resource or organisational perspective, it is necessary to determine whether an EVP serves the goals of the organisation and meets the expectations of employees, as meeting both goals and expectations has a bearing on organisational success.

Research approach/design and method: The purpose was to establish a link between EVP, affective commitment and intention-to-serve and was designed in a cross-sectional research manner. This study adopted a quantitative approach during which data were collected across the EC province from 376 operational traffic officers from junior to first supervisory level and employed by the EC Department of Transport. STATISTICA version 13 was used for the processing of data.

Main findings: Employee satisfaction with the EVP and affective commitment were unconfirmed. In terms of the two subfactors of intention-to-serve, namely intent-to-perform and intent-to-use-discretion, intent-to-perform obtained the higher scores. The EVP was found to be a predictor of both affective commitment and intention-to-serve.

Practical/managerial implications: The study makes a case for revisiting the EVP offered to traffic officers, and recommendations in this respect are provided.

Contribution/value-add: This study is a prima facie case that focusses on an EVP in the context of traffic officers in South Africa and, specifically, traffic officers in the EC. Also, based on the databases searched, little research was found that focussed on intention-to-serve from the perspective of traffic officers.

Keywords: affective commitment; employee value proposition; intention-to-serve; road safety; traffic officer.

Background

Orientation

Road safety is a persistent concern in South Africa. The South African Department of Transport report (2023) indicates that in 2022, a total of 12541 died in road accidents across the country. While South African road safety legislation meets international legislative standards, enforcement of safety regulations remains problematic (Du Plessis et al., 2020). According to Du Plessis et al. (2020), international comparisons show that South Africans engage in riskier road behaviour than people from most other countries. Risky road behaviour manifests as unsafe pedestrian behaviour, driving under the influence and not wearing seatbelts. Stricter law enforcement is therefore necessary, and traffic officers play an important role in this respect.

The South African Department of Transport (n.d.) adopted the *National Road Safety Strategy 2016–2030* (NRSS) that documents key challenges with reference to traffic officers. These challenges include a shortage of suitably qualified traffic officers, the attitude of traffic officers towards motorists, disrespect shown by the public towards traffic officers and bribery of traffic officers.

However, except for training of traffic officers, the NRSS does not propose any strategies for dealing with these challenges. Importantly, the NRSS does not address the professionalisation of the career of traffic officer. This omission comes despite the primary mandate of traffic officers being safeguarding of the South Africa's roads (Macpherson, 2017) and despite reports, specifically with respect to the Eastern Cape (EC), doubting traffic officers' performance in this regard. It is reported, for example, that compared to the late 2021 and early 2022 festive season, the late 2022 and early 2023 festive season has seen an increase of 4% fatal crashes and 7.4% fatalities in the EC, placing the province third in terms of highest percentage fatalities (Road Traffic Management Corporation, 2023). As public transport is the primary mode of transport for many people in the EC, it is a concern that, from 2017 to 2022, road accidents involving buses and minibuses have shown an increase of 25%. Such accidents are mostly attributed to intoxication, negligence, driver fatigue and driver incompetence. The National Development Plan 2030 outlined that matters such as the roadworthiness of vehicles, vehicle driver behaviour, alcohol and substance abuse and weaknesses in law enforcement had to be monitored and controlled, with the ultimate goal of reducing road fatalities by 50% from the 2010 baseline (South African Department of Transport, n.d.).

Reports of inefficiency and corruption coupled with poor service delivery (South African Department of Transport, n.d.) reflect lack of commitment by traffic officers and dissatisfaction with working conditions. The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) (Magubane, 2024) expresses their concerns over the working conditions of traffic officers, which prevent these officers from executing their jobs effectively. POPCRU bemoans the fact that no central authority is taking charge of traffic officers employed by provincial departments of transport, also that traffic officers lack the necessary equipment such as vehicles and firearms to perform their duties effectively. These issues may affect the job satisfaction of traffic officers, as well as their commitment to the profession and intention to serve. While expressing his appreciation for the greater availability and use of technology in law enforcement, POPCRU president Thulani Ngwenya highlights insufficient human and financial resources, workload, and a restricted justice system as factors that negatively impact the efficiency of traffic officers (Daniels, 2023).

The earlier exposition provides impetus to an exploration of the employee value proposition (EVP) of traffic officers. Mercer (n.d.), a professional services organisation, and Phungula et al. (2022) regard an EVP as an integral part of a company's total employee benefits and rewards strategy and indicate that, to be relevant, the EVP must reflect the expectations of employees. Phungula et al. (2022) view an EVP as a manifestation of a psychological contract and of normative commitment, with the latter reflecting feelings of obligation. This study, however, is more concerned with affective commitment, which implies alignment of the goals and expectations of employees with the goals of the organisation.

Research relating to human resources in the Eastern Cape (EC) traffic fraternity is very limited, with no research findings that specifically explore a link between EVP, organisational commitment and intention-to-serve. Previous research that has been conducted in a traffic law enforcement context focusses mainly on traffic legislation and adherence thereto (Du Plessis et al., 2020), training of traffic officers (Kockott, 2020) and challenges experienced by traffic officers (Pienaar, 2007; Ramavhunga, 2018). Some of the findings from the study by Ramavhunga (2018) are relevant to this study, such as the main challenges being lack of training, lack of management skills, poor collaboration among law enforcement officers, staff shortages, poor motivation and lack of modern equipment. In even more recent research conducted by Taumang et al. (2022), in which a framework has been developed for collaboration among policing units (Metro Police Services, City Traffic Police, National Traffic Police Unit and the South African Police Service – SAPS), remuneration and training are identified as factors influencing the morale, motivation and sense of responsibility of traffic officers.

Owing to the scanty scientific research, it remained unknown whether the EVP offered by the EC Department of Transport had a desired effect on the affective commitment of traffic officers, nudging them towards service excellence. Therefore, this study explored the extent to which affective commitment and an intention-to-serve can be bolstered by means of an EVP among EC traffic officers.

Research purpose and objectives

The purpose of this study is to explore the link between EVP, affective commitment and intention-to-serve in relation to traffic officers in the EC. The research objectives guiding the study are to:

- conduct a literature study on the constructs of EVP, affective commitment and intention-to-serve;
- conduct an empirical study to measure the perceptions of traffic officers in respect of an EVP, their level of affective commitment and their level of intention-to-serve;
- determine whether the EVP is a significant predictor of the level of affective commitment of traffic officers;
- determine whether the EVP is a significant predictor of the level of intention-to-serve of traffic officers and
- determine whether a link exists between the levels of affective commitment and intention-to-serve of traffic officers.

Literature review

Organisational commitment

With human capital outperforming financial capital as the main anchor of organisational effectiveness in the contemporary workplace, organisations need committed employees to achieve their short-term and long-term objectives (Das & Dhan, 2022; Ngirande, 2021). Employees' organisational commitment implies their identification with and involvement in the organisation (Afshari et al., 2020).

This psychological state of mind binds them to the organisation. Employees with a high level of organisational commitment demonstrate the right attitude when performing tasks, being more productive and more focussed on providing quality service (Pieters et al., 2020). The three-component model of organisational commitment (encompassing affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) describing the unique bond between the employee and employer (Allen & Meyer, 1991) is considered in this study. This study focusses on affective commitment. The reason being that, in contrast to continuance commitment, which implies commitment in response to potential rewards, and normative commitment, which implies commitment in response to obligation, affective commitment is a response to organisational goals, as is explained next.

Affective commitment

Affective commitment is theorised as an employee's desire to remain in the organisation because of congruence between the employee's personal goals and the goals of the employer (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Committed employees act as ambassadors for the organisation because they strongly identify with the organisation's values, which, in turn, also increases their involvement in the organisation. Employees who connect with the organisation through positive affect support the organisation's goals, are rarely absent from work and demonstrate greater job satisfaction (Pieters et al., 2020). Research suggests that affective commitment is the most desired commitment component because it correlates with positive work attitudes (Mercurio, 2015; Paillé & Mejia-Morelos, 2019). Mercurio (2015) refers to affective commitment as the 'core essence' of organisational commitment. Employees with high levels of affective commitment usually have good intentions and produce superior outputs. However, it is reasoned that affective commitment is bolstered only when the EVP offered to employees addresses their needs and expectations (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018). Factors linking to a satisfactory EVP include job-related factors such as challenge, role clarity and role importance and organisational factors such as empowerment, organisational support, leadership and organisational reputation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Intention-to-serve

Peyton and Zigarmi (2024) define intentions as latent thought patterns or mental images of the behaviour a person plans to perform. These researchers find intentions to be reliable predictors of actual behaviour. Intention represents an emotional and mental process linked to an attitude that influences behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1981). Attitude is regarded as the strongest predictor of intention, which, in turn, is the strongest predictor of behaviour (Villarrubia, 2006). As such, the intentions of employees to serve are a good indicator of collective organisational goal orientation (Roberts & Zigarmi, 2014). As intentions are associated with cognitive and emotional processes and seen as reliable predictors of behaviour, this study postulates that positive

perceptions of an EVP would predict the intention of traffic officers to serve. In the context of this study, 'intention-to-serve' is depicted as a combination of 'intent-to-use-discretion' and 'intent-to-perform'. Intent-to-use-discretion implies the intent to make judgements within legal parameters, while intent-to-perform reflects the intent to apply best practices (Auzoult, 2015). The intention of an employee to serve develops from the employee's latent evaluation of overall work experience, which subsequently influences judgements about courses of action in relation to job performance (Roberts & Zigarmi, 2014). Increased levels of intention-to-serve are expected to correlate with affective commitment (Stallworth, 2003).

Employee value proposition

An EVP is influenced by factors both internal and external to the organisation such as political, economical, social, technological-environmental and legal factors and public perception of traffic officers (Le-Kay, 2021). Because of the focus of this study, only factors internal to the organisation would be focussed on. Organisations must understand what is meant by an EVP and how different aspects of an EVP affect performance (Das & Dhan, 2022; Theys & Barkhuizen, 2022). Employee value proposition refers to the integrated set of monetary and nonmonetary rewards and benefits that employees receive in exchange for their effort and performance (Pawar & Charak, 2014; Pawar et al., 2023; Theys & Barkhuizen, 2022). Based on the 'give and get' concept (Pawar & Charak, 2014), an EVP manifests as a psychological contract between the employer and employee. While an EVP is aligned with the overall goals and values of the organisation reflecting the employer brand, it must meet the unspoken needs and expectations of employees and, most importantly, be appealing to them (Pawar et al., 2023). The value of an EVP is generally underestimated by human resource professionals and organisational leaders in not only the private sector but, in South Africa, also the public sector (McLean-Conner, 2015; Theys & Barkhuizen, 2022).

The absence of an effective EVP results in an inability to attract quality employees, engage new entrants, retain competent employees, re-engage existing employees, involve employees, establish a talent pool and ensure purposeful employment (Goswami, 2015). An EVP should communicate to both existing and prospective employees all the aspects that the organisation offers, and its employees may expect. The EVP design should mirror the organisation's strategy of a 'one-company culture' that is in alignment with the organisation's external brand (Bussin, 2014). The organisation's brand, psychological contract, diversity of employees and engagement, attraction and retention needs, as well as the employees' needs should be considered in the design of the EVP (Rounak & Misra, 2020).

Employee value proposition components

Interrogation of literature and previous empirical research suggests the key components of an EVP relate to career or

talent development opportunities, the organisation itself (branding and culture), relationships, remuneration and reward and the work itself (Corporate Leadership Council, 2012; Grobler et al., 2012; McKinsey Global Institute, 2001; Pawar & Charak, 2014; Theys & Barkhuizen, 2022). Das and Dhan (2022) specifically mention perceived organisational support, work environment, image of the organisation, rewards and benefits, recognition, opportunity for growth, work-life balance, relationships and exchange quality as EVP factors. In this study, EVP components investigated include career development opportunities, the organisation (brand and culture), relationships, remuneration and reward and the work itself.

Career development opportunities

Career development opportunities are an important aspect of employment and lack thereof a main reason why employees leave an organisation (Theys & Barkhuizen, 2022). In a world of work where the 'war for talent' is persistent, employees are constantly looking for career development opportunities in line with their developmental needs (Bettelley, 2015). In addition, the development of talent is crucial in an evolving working world (Schwab, 2018). Career development is an ongoing process and the shared responsibility of management, human resource directorates and employees (Corporate Leadership Council, 2012). Managers should provide employees with the necessary resources to perform effectively; human resource directorates are responsible for engraving developmental practices into organisational policies (Bussin, 2014); and employees are responsible for utilising developmental opportunities.

Lack of career development opportunities may result in lack of commitment and, ultimately, poor service delivery (Amushila & Bussin, 2021). Organisations intervene deliberately by developing the careers of employees, not only to focus on employee growth but also to address service delivery shortfalls (Warnich et al., 2015). Insufficient career development opportunities for employees adversely affect employee commitment (Bwowe, 2020). Therefore, to build and sustain employee commitment, organisations must pursue training, coaching, mentoring, succession planning, career management and employment security.

Organisation (brand and culture)

Employees' perceptions of the reputation and values of an organisation directly impact their work experience; therefore, the organisation brand and culture as they relate to employee commitment should be addressed (Anand et al., 2018; McKinsey Global Institute, 2001; Theys & Barkhuizen, 2022). Factors enhancing an organisation's perceived identity directly impact the thoughts, beliefs and expectations of employees and need to be identified (Rounak & Misra, 2020). Also in the public sector, employees wish to identify with an institution that is admired (Štríteská & Sein, 2021). In such institutions, a healthy work culture is characterised by a positive work environment, organisational citizenship,

ethical conduct, flexible work arrangements, constructive and friendly relationships and collaboration (Anand et al., 2018). The morale of employees will be high, as the employees believe they are part of the organisation. A high morale, in turn, leads to increased productivity, innovation and creativity. However, the results of a study by Mokgojwa (2019) suggest that, in the absence of employer brand characteristics, government institutions experience significant low productivity and high employee turnover. The presence of a positive organisational brand enhances identification with the organisation and performance towards both short-term and long-term organisational goals (Pawar, 2014).

Relationships

Sound workplace relationships are built on trust, respect, inclusion and effective communication, promoting a sense of identity, belonging, kindness and integrity (Warnich et al., 2015). Sound relationships at work are crucial for optimum performance, especially in a law enforcement environment where officers are required to interact, share information, solve problems and support each other under straining conditions (Goswami, 2015). Constructive work relationships are linked to better service delivery and enhanced commitment (Pendell, 2022). In the workplace, the quality of relationships is defined by the organisational culture and work environment, as well as the level of camaraderie, collegial orientation, quality of coworkers and managers, the reputation of senior leadership and the organisation's reputation for people management (Macpherson, 2017). In the contemporary workplace where teamwork and lateral interactions are important for attaining effectiveness and efficiency, an awareness of positive psychology and how it applies to various facets of work are changing perceptions about the meaning of relationships (Bussin, 2014). Robertson and Cooper (2011) indicate sound relationships among coworkers accompanied by a sense of belonging as a key factor of employee well-being.

Remuneration and reward

In the 'give and get' transactional employment relationship, employees expect to be remunerated and rewarded for their contributions to the organisation (Al Aina & Atan, 2020). Remuneration refers to tangible and intangible rewards and includes compensation, medical aid, retirement annuities and annual leave. All of these are perceived by employees to be a measurable value of their worth to the organisation (Willis Towers Watson, 2016). As remuneration is a main connector between an employee and employer, issues of fairness, consistency, flexibility and equality should be carefully considered (Bussin, 2014). Anand et al. (2018) and Van der Merwe (2018) find a strong positive relationship between remuneration and superior employee and organisational performance.

Reward, in contrast to remuneration, entails a combination of intrinsic rewards, which are self-administered, and extrinsic rewards, which are managed by an organisation in cognisance

of employee needs and expectations (Bussin, 2014). Offering a unique combination of these rewards in a highly competitive labour market adds value to the organisation. The range of rewards can include vacation benefits, innovation awards, service awards and performance awards, which may be offered annually (Pandita, 2011). In addition to the work itself and career development opportunities, remuneration and reward is a vital consideration when employees have to decide on whether or not to take up employment (Willis Towers Watson, 2016). An attractive EVP reflecting a total rewards system can be perceived as an ecosystem that engages new employees and re-engages existing employees (Anand et al., 2018).

Work

Traditionally, the work of traffic officer is perceived as repetitive and demotivating; however, in this day and age, employees, also traffic officers, wish to perform work that is seen as meaningful (Bussin, 2014). Meaningful work refers to work that is challenging, impactful and interesting – work that allows for variation, autonomy, a sense of responsibility and timely feedback. Intent and commitment as shaped by perceptions, expectations and preferences for meaningful work have a direct impact on the extent to which employees strive to provide the service expected of them (Deci et al., 1999). However, employees often have to perform complex duties in a demanding working environment that is marked by unreasonable workloads and a mismatch of expectations and competencies (Ashley, 2018). To ensure work that is more meaningful to traffic officers, traffic officers need to be allocated tasks matching their competencies, receive training, develop problem-solving skills, receive timely and constructive feedback and be recognised for their effort.

Research methodology

Design

A positivistic research paradigm and a quantitative research approach were adopted to objectively explore the link between EVP, affective commitment and intention-to-serve. Such research paradigm and research approach allow for the generalisation of findings to a larger population (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The population for this study comprised traffic officers employed by the EC Department of Transport and deployed across the province.

Research procedure

Research ethics clearance was obtained from the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences' Research Ethics Committee at the Nelson Mandela University in line with guidelines of the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Ethical issues considered include the age of participants, anonymity and confidentiality, full disclosure and no harm to participants (Cassim, 2011). A cover letter accompanying the measuring instrument explained the purpose of the study, informed consent, anonymity and

confidentiality, voluntary participation and participants' right to withdraw from the research at any stage. Each potential participant received a paper questionnaire, which they could complete in their own time and, on completion, deposit in a sealed box. No identifying information was requested.

Measuring instrument

For data collection, a self-administered paper questionnaire designed by the researcher was used. The questionnaire was piloted among 10 potential respondents. The first section of the questionnaire collected the biographical data presented in Table 1. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5) measured respondents' opinions or attitudes. The questionnaire included an EVP scale of 29 items developed from the work of Bussin (2014), Corporate Leadership Council (2012), Fielding (2012), Keller and Meanie (2017) and Pandita (2011), covering the subfactors relationships, career development, remuneration and reward, organisation and work. Allen and Meyer's (1991) 8-item scale was used for measuring affective commitment.

TABLE 1: Biographical data.

Description	Frequency	(%)
Race		
African people	264	73.9
Mixed race people	82	23.0
Indian people	1	0.3
White people	9	2.5
Other	1	0.3
Total	357	100
Age group (years)		
18–29	27	7.6
30–39	178	49.9
40–49	107	30.0
50–59	45	12.6
Total	357	100
District		
Amathole	70	19.6
Chris Hani	53	14.8
Alfred Nzo	33	9.2
Joe Gqabi	36	10.1
OR Tambo	51	14.3
Sarah Baartman	114	31.9
Total	357	100
Years of service		
Less than 5	20	5.6
5–9	208	58.3
10–19	74	20.7
20+	55	15.4
Total	357	100
Occupational level		
Level 6 (junior traffic officer)	291	81.5
Level 7 (team leader traffic officer)	36	10.1
Level 8 (supervisory traffic officer)	30	8.4
Total	357	100
Gender		
Male	240	67.2
Female	117	32.8
Total	357	100

Items for the intention-to-serve scale were sourced and adopted from the Employee Work Passion Appraisal model developed by Zigarmi et al. (2011), with these items measuring intent-to-use-discretion and intent-to-perform.

Using existing scales and aligning questionnaire items with the main findings from the literature study ensured the measuring instrument's content validity and face validity. In addition, the EVP and intention-to-serve scales obtained Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0.75 and 0.91 (Table 2). The scale measuring affective commitment obtained a lower alpha of 0.66, which can still be considered acceptable (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). With the affective commitment scale having fewer items, a lower alpha could be expected (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). STATISTICA version 13 was used for data processing and analysis.

Research respondents

The target population comprised traffic officers employed by the EC Department of Transport on occupational Levels 6, 7 and 8. The questionnaire was distributed to 376 traffic officers. Of the 358 questionnaires completed, 357 were found useable, giving a response rate of 95%.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for biographical data obtained from the sample. The respondents were mostly African (73.9%) and between the ages of 30 and 39 years (49.9%). The respondents were drawn from the six EC districts, with the highest representation (31.9%) from the Sarah Baartman District. Only 15.4% of respondents had more than 20 years of service, with the majority of respondents (63.9%) having less than 10 years of service. In terms of occupational level, Level 6 (junior traffic officer) was indicated by 81.5% of respondents, Level 7 (team leader traffic officer) by 10.1% of respondents and Level 8 (supervisory traffic officer) by 8.4% of respondents. The male-to-female ratio of the respondents was 2.05:1.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was granted by the Nelson Mandela University on 04 July 2016. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, informed consent, anonymity and their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Results

Descriptive statistics, correlations and hypothesis testing

Table 2 presents a summary of the descriptive statistics for EVP, affective commitment and intention-to-serve. The mean scores for the EVP factors slant towards 'disagree' responses with the standard deviation (SD) ranging between 0.63 and 0.79, indicating relative consistency in responses obtained. The mean score for affective commitment shows a tendency towards neutral responses, with an SD of 0.66, also indicating consistency in responses. Intention-to-serve delivered varying results, with the subfactor intent-to-use-discretion showing a tendency towards neutral responses (mean 2.93) and intent-to-perform slanting more towards 'agree' responses (mean 3.76).

Correlation analysis

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient measured the degree and direction of the relationships among EVP, affective commitment and intention-to-serve and their respective components (Table 3). Correlations are found statistically significant at 0.104 and statistically and practically significant at $r \geq 0.300$ (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). The results in Table 3 show all correlations are positive and statistically significant, with a minimum $r = 0.271$ (weak association) and a maximum $r = 0.723$ (strong association). Importantly, the components of EVP show statistically and practically significant positive relationships with affective commitment and intention-to-serve, with a moderate association. In addition, intent-to-use-discretion correlates strongly with intent-to-perform, with $r = 0.723$.

Multiple regression analyses

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the predictive value of EVP in relation to affective commitment and intention-to-serve (intent-to-use-discretion and intent-to-perform). As is evident in Table 4, the overall EVP ($\beta = 0.48$; $t = 9.55$; $R = 0.45$) is shown to be a significant predictor of affective commitment. The p -value is 0.0 and EVP explains 20% of the variance in affective commitment. Any change in the EVP for traffic officers is therefore expected to lead to a change in their affective commitment.

TABLE 2: Descriptive statistics for employee value proposition, affective commitment and intention-to-serve.

Component	Cronbach alpha	Mean	SD	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)	Positive (%)
Career development	0.78	1.61	0.63	90.8	8.1	1.1
Organisation	0.79	1.87	0.73	82.9	13.7	3.4
Relationships (manager and team)	0.78	2.16	0.89	66.7	24.1	9.2
Remuneration and reward	0.75	1.84	0.64	88.2	10.1	1.7
Work	0.78	2.62	0.79	49.3	33.6	17.1
Overall EVP	0.90	2.02	0.63	82.6	15.4	2.0
Affective commitment	0.66	2.58	0.66	44.3	47.9	7.8
Intent-to-use-discretion	0.85	2.93	1.04	31.9	35.9	32.2
Intent-to-perform	0.91	3.76	1.04	14.0	10.6	75.4
Intention-to-serve	0.84	3.35	0.97	18.5	26.9	54.6

Note: The factors in bold are the sum of the factors tested in this study. SD, standard deviation; EVP, employee value proposition.

TABLE 3: Pearson product-moment correlation results.

Variables tested	Employee value proposition						AFFEC	Intention-to-serve		
	OPPOR	ORG	REL	REM	WORK	TOTAL		DISC	PER	TOTAL
OPPOR	-	0.716	0.596	0.685	0.609	0.828	0.355	0.279	0.274	0.298
ORG	0.716	-	0.723	0.698	0.673	0.891	0.452	0.441	0.379	0.442
REL	0.596	0.723	-	0.551	0.661	0.848	0.365	0.398	0.380	0.419
REM	0.685	0.698	0.551	-	0.706	0.837	0.370	0.339	0.281	0.333
WORK	0.609	0.673	0.661	0.706	-	0.861	0.387	0.406	0.398	0.433
Total	0.828	0.891	0.848	0.837	0.861	-	0.452	0.442	0.407	0.457
AFFEC	0.355	0.452	0.365	0.370	0.387	0.452	-	0.410	0.271	0.366
DISC	0.279	0.441	0.398	0.339	0.406	0.442	0.410	-	0.723	0.928
PER	0.274	0.379	0.380	0.281	0.398	0.407	0.271	0.723	-	0.929
Total	0.298	0.442	0.419	0.333	0.433	0.457	0.366	0.928	0.929	-

Note: The items in bold represent relationships that are both statistically and practically significant while the ones not in bold indicate relationships that are statistically significant but not practically. OPPOR, opportunities; ORG, organisation; REL, relationships; REM, remuneration; WORK, work; AFFEC, affective commitment; DISC, intent-to-use-discretion; PER, intent-to-perform.

TABLE 4: Regression analyses' results.

Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR
0.48	9.55	0.00	0.45	0.20	0.20
Regression analysis for overall EVP and affective commitment					
0.33	7.08	0.00	0.35	0.12	0.12
Regression analysis for overall EVP and intent-to-use-discretion					
0.68	8.40	0.00	0.41	0.17	0.16
Regression analysis for overall EVP and intent-to-perform					

EVP, employee value proposition.

The overall EVP also shows a significant positive relationship with intent-to-use-discretion ($\beta = 0.33$; $t = 7.08$; $R = 0.12$; $p = 0.0$). In this case, the overall EVP explains 12% of the variance in intent-to-use-discretion. In addition, EVP is also a predictor of intent-to-perform ($\beta = 0.68$; $t = 8.40$; $R = 0.41$), with EVP explaining 17% of the variance in intent-to-perform ($p = 0.0$). From these results, the beta coefficient (0.68) is higher for intent-to-perform than for intent-to-use-discretion (0.33), which suggests that changes in an EVP are more likely to lead to a change in intent-to-perform.

Testing of hypotheses

The following hypotheses are applicable to this study:

- **H1:** EC provincial traffic officers have positive perceptions of key components of an EVP.
- **H2:** EC provincial traffic officers have a high level of affective commitment.
- **H3:** EC provincial traffic officers have a high level of intention-to-serve.
- **H4:** EVP is a predictor of affective commitment among traffic officers employed in the EC.
- **H5:** EVP is a predictor of intention-to-serve among traffic officers employed in the EC.
- **H6:** A significant positive relationship exists between affective commitment and intention-to-serve among traffic officers employed in the EC.

The descriptive analyses (Table 2) reveal more negative or 'disagree' responses to EVP (mean 2.02) and its respective components, except for work, which obtained a neutral response. The traffic officers surveyed in the study did not perceive the key components of an EVP positively, and *H1* is therefore not accepted. Responses to affective commitment reveal a neutral response (mean 2.58), and *H2*

is therefore not accepted. The traffic officers surveyed did not convincingly express an affective commitment. Intention-to-serve obtained a mean of 3.35, indicating a neutral response. While intent-to-perform obtained a positive mean (3.76), it is offset by a neutral response to intent-to-use-discretion (mean 2.93). The traffic officers surveyed had the intent to perform, but not the intent to use discretion. *H3* is partially accepted.

Correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between EVP, affective commitment and intention-to-serve (Table 3), while regression analyses were used to test EVP as a predictive factor of affective commitment and intention-to-serve (Table 4). A moderate positive correlation is found between EVP and affective commitment (0.452) and between EVP and intention-to-serve (0.457). Employee value proposition is found to be a predictor of affective commitment ($R^2 = 0.20$), intent-to-perform ($R^2 = 0.17$) and intent-to-use-discretion (0.12), with *p*-values of 0.0. *H4* and *H5* are therefore accepted.

Discussion

Road safety in South Africa is a serious concern (South African Department of Transport, 2023), and traffic officers play an important role in penalising and reducing the risky behaviours of motorists and changing the behaviours of pedestrians (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Macpherson, 2017). The NRSS adopted by the South African government mentions various challenges relating to traffic officers, including lack of qualifications, attitudes towards motorists and corruption, with training being the only remedy suggested (South African Department of Transport, n.d.). The strategy does not mention an EVP, irrespective of affirmation of its value by road safety practitioners and researchers alike (Mercer, n.d.; Phungula et al., 2022). Failure to attend to a suitable EVP for traffic officers will undoubtedly have a negative impact on the affective commitment of this cohort and their intention to provide a service (Auzoult, 2015; Das & Dhan, 2022; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1981; Mercurio, 2015; Ngirande, 2021; Paillé & Mejia-Morelos, 2019; Roberts & Zigarmi, 2014; Stallworth, 2003; Villarrubia, 2006).

This study provides valuable insights into how affective commitment and intention-to-serve can be redressed by means of an EVP, specifically with reference to traffic officers

who have operational road safety and traffic control responsibilities. In this respect, Bussin (2014) equates an EVP to a 'one-company culture' that also reflects the organisational brand.

The results of the study reveal that the EC traffic officers surveyed lack of positive perceptions regarding key components of an EVP presented to them. All EVP components presented achieved low mean scores, with the highest mean score obtained for work (2.62) (refer to Table 2). Career development obtained the lowest mean score (1.61). Regarding response consistency, the SD ranged between 0.63 and 0.89, suggesting that, irrespective of biographical differences, traffic officers have similar perceptions of the EVP as derived from their employment experience. It raises concerns when an EVP is lacking, failing or undervalued: Literature suggests employees are more committed to their organisation and show greater intention-to-serve when they are satisfied with the benefits deriving from the employment relationship (Bergman & Årnström, 2010; Knox, 2013).

Concerning affective commitment, the low mean score of 2.58 and low SD of 0.66 suggests that traffic officers experience misalignment of their goals with those of their employer. This result is unsettling, as affective commitment is emphasised in literature as the most desirable component of organisational commitment. It indicates support for an organisation's short-term and long-term goals (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Pieters et al., 2020).

Intention-to-serve received a more positive response as measured by intent-to-use-discretion (mean 2.93) and intent-to-perform (mean 3.76), even though the SD for these variables was slightly higher (1.04). These results suggest that the traffic officers surveyed would more likely perform than use their discretion. These results probably suggest that although traffic officers lack a positive perception of key EVP components, they still wish to be of service. Lack of intent to use discretion could potentially be ascribed to specific EVP components such as work, which in the case of traffic officers may be more structured.

The results of the Pearson product-moment correlation show strong correlations among the components of EVP. These results are consistent with proposals from the literature that the EVP components should coherently and collectively represent the values and brand of the organisation (Bussin, 2017; McLean-Conner, 2015). Positive correlations are found between EVP, affective commitment and intention-to-serve. While correlation analyses do not indicate the direction of influence, it could be logically deduced that EVP is an independent variable in the equation. This assertion is supported by the multiple regression analyses indicating that the EVP explains 20% of the variance in affective commitment, 17% of the variance in intent-to-use-discretion and 12% of the variance in intent-to-perform. Overall, the results confirm that EVP influences affective

TABLE 5: Hypothesis description and decision.

Hypotheses	Confirmed/ not confirmed
1. EC provincial traffic officers have positive perceptions of key components of an EVP.	Not confirmed
2. EC provincial traffic officers have a high level of affective commitment.	Not confirmed
3. EC provincial traffic officers have a high level of intention-to-serve.	Partially confirmed
4. EVP is a predictor of affective commitment among traffic officers employed in the EC.	Confirmed
5. EVP is a predictor of intention-to-serve among traffic officers employed in the EC.	Confirmed
6. A significant positive relationship exists between affective commitment and intention-to-serve among traffic officers employed in the EC.	Confirmed

EC, Eastern Cape; EVP, employee value proposition.

commitment and intention-to-serve. The link between affective commitment and intention-to-serve is also confirmed. These results again highlight that for the best return on investment, an EVP should be deemed attractive by employees (Bussin, 2014). Table 5 summarises the final outcomes in relation to the hypotheses.

Managerial implications

This study has managerial implications for the provincial departments of transport and all managers engaging with traffic officers, but especially the senior and middle management of the EC Department of Transport. Since the South African government is serious about reducing road traffic accidents and fatalities, all provincial departments of transport should prioritise the EVP of traffic officers tasked with enforcing road traffic legislation.

The first step would be to redress the current EVP offered to traffic officers. The results of this study indicate that the current EVP might be lacking one or more cornerstones of an effective EVP as identified in the literature study. The EC Department of Transport should, for example, reconsider the remuneration package of traffic officers, which is tangible evidence of the value placed on effort and performance (Bussin, 2014; Willis Towers Watson, 2016) and serve as a drawcard for the employment of qualified traffic officers. The concept of what constitutes performance and the potential rewards for performance should be clarified and communicated to traffic officers to increase their reward expectations, effort and performance levels. The meaning of work should also be addressed, as the job of traffic officer traditionally is perceived to be stressful. This study also established that traffic officers' intent to use discretion is quite low. In this respect, work can be made more challenging and substantial if suitable technology, variation in responsibility and timely feedback are introduced. This study also found that career development is lacking, which is in line with the lack of suitable training identified in previous research (Ramavhumga, 2018). While the South African Department of Transport (n.d.) emphasises training as an immediate strategy for addressing various challenges, the specific training needs of traffic officers should be identified, prioritised and linked to the

professionalisation of the career of traffic officer. Job rotation and job enrichment imply more developmental opportunities, facilitating succession planning and addressing the meaning of work. The aforementioned considerations would enhance the constructive relationships between employer and employees and supervisors and employees. As emotions affect decisions, many good employees leave a workplace owing to their relationship with their immediate supervisor. Workplace relationships have implications for both affective commitment and the intention to serve. Supervisors should be capable and demonstrate people-oriented leadership. To ensure a compelling EVP, supervisors should be trained in establishing positive workplace relationships and in stimulating a positive discourse about the career of traffic officer. Ultimately, traffic officers should be able to state:

'My job is interesting, challenging and rewarding. I continuously grow and develop. I am part of a high performing and supportive team. I make a difference in South Africa. I am proud to work for the EC Department of Transport. I nominate the EC Department of Transport as best employer.' (author's own words)

It should also be borne in mind that an EVP is never truly completed. As it requires constant testing and reviewing, it should be a regular agenda item for management's attention.

Conclusion

Although road safety depends on many factors, this study focusses on traffic officers' direct mandate to enforce road safety and road traffic legislation. This study investigates EVP as a predictor of traffic officers' affective commitment to the EC Department of Transport and their intention to serve. Organisations that strive for employee performance in line with their organisation's vision and strategic intentions should offer employees an EVP that addresses employee needs and expectations. A compelling EVP will bolster the affective commitment of employees, their intent-to-serve and, in the case of EC traffic officers, their intent-to-use-discretion. When employees experience alignment of personal and organisational goals, they will not only perform excellently and develop personally, but also attain the goals of the organisation.

Limitations and recommendations

This study was conducted in the six district municipalities of the EC, excluding its two metropolitan municipalities. It also involved only the EC Department of Transport, excluding all other provincial departments of transport and traffic law enforcement fraternities that may encounter similar problems. Similar studies involving more provinces and/or road safety fraternities could test this study's hypotheses delivering comparative research. This study focussed on determining the relationship between EVP and traffic officers' affective commitment to the EC Department of Transport and their intention to serve, engaging only traffic officers employed at occupational Levels 6, 7 and 8. Future research involving the same population or more

populations within the EC Department of Transport could prove valuable for adoption of the EVP to the needs and expectations of both the employer and employees, thereby benefitting not only the career of traffic officer but also road safety in South Africa.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

W.E.M. formulated the original manuscript and A.W. assisted with the refining of the manuscript.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author, W.M., upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

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