JOB CHARACTERISTICS, EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND WORK - RELATED FLOW IN AN INSURANCE INDUSTRY CALL CENTRE

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REMARKS

The reader is to be reminded of the following:

- The references as well as the editorial style comply with the requirements prescribed by the *Publication Manual (5th edition)* of the American Psychological Association (APA). This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University namely to make use of the APA style in all scientific documents as from January 1999.

- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* (which agrees largely with the APA style) was used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

- The mini-dissertation is presented as one research article.

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SUMMARY

Topic: Job characteristics, emotional labour and work related flow in an insurance industry call centre.

Key terms: Call centres, job demands, job resources, emotional labour, work-related flow

The global call centre industry has experienced significant growth over the past few years. South Africa has experienced the same trend and in addition, is increasingly beginning to appear on the radar screens of international organisations looking at offshoring opportunities. Call centres form a critical link between companies and their customers. Well-run call centres balance operations between the goals of efficiency and service quality, as to ensure satisfied customers. The window of opportunity exists for South Africa to compete and excel in business process outsourcing and call centre industries in English speaking markets such as America, Canada, the United Kingdom and Ireland. In the call centre work environment, the main business is mediated by computer and telephone-based technologies that facilitate remote human encounters between the end customer and the employee over the telephone. Besides being managed and controlled by a relatively small number of managers, call centre agents' activities are often managed, measured and monitored by computer technology. Research has proved that this can place enormous pressure on these employees, resulting in a demanding and stressful job.

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow of call centre agents in an insurance company. A cross-sectional survey design was used with an availability sample (N = 156). A self-constructed instrument, Job Demands and Resources Scale (JDRS), was used to measure the unique job demands and job resources in the insurance industry. In addition to the JDRS, the Frankfurt Emotion Work Scales-E (FEWS) and the Work-Related Flow Scale (WOLF) were used as measuring instruments.

The results showed that there is some correlation between the job demands and job resources and their impact on the experience of emotional labour and work-related flow. It further indicated that the availability of some job resources and the lack of job demands are predictors of work-related flow and conversely the presence of job demands and the lack of

job resources are in some instances predictors of emotional labour. No differences were found between demographic groups of employees regarding levels of emotional labour and work-related flow.

Recommendations were made for further research.

OPSOMMING

Onderwerp: Werkseienskappe, emosionele arbeid en werksverwante vloei in 'n versekerings industrie inbelsentrum.

Sleutelterme: Telefoniesehulpbelsentrums, werkeise, werkhulpbronne, emosionele arbeid, werksverwante vloei.

Die internasionale inbelsentrum industrie het oor die afgelope paar jaar geweldige groei getoon. Hierdie tendens is ook in Suid-Afrika ervaar. Dit is ook duidelik dat internasionale kliënte Suid Afrika oorweeg in terme van koste effektiewe buitelandse geleenthede. Inbelsentrums vorm 'n kritieke skakel tussen organisasies en hulle kliënte. Goeie inbelsentrums vind 'n balans tussen die doelwitte van effektiwiteit en kwaliteit diens, om sodoende kliënte tevredenheid te verseker. Daar is 'n geleentheid vir Suid-Afrika om op hierdie gebied mee te ding in Engelssprekende markte soos Amerika, Kanada, die Verenigde Koningkryke en Ierland. In die inbelsentrum werksomgewing word werk hoofsaaklik gefasiliteer deur rekenaar en telefoon gebaseerde sisteme, om kontak tussen die kliënt en die organisasie moontlik te maak. Inbelsentrum konsultante word deur 'n relatiewe klein hoeveelheid bestuurders beheer en word hoofsaaklik gemonitor en ge-evalueer deur rekenaar tegnologie. Navorsing het getoon dat dit geweldige druk op die werknemer kan plaas, met die gevolg dat dit as 'n veeleisende en stresvolle werk gesien kan word.

Die doelwit van hierdie navorsing was om ondersoek in te stel na die verhouding tussen werkseienskappe, emosionele arbeid en werksverwante vloei van telefoniesehulpsentrum-agente binne 'n versekeringsfirma. 'n Dwarsdeursnee-opname ontwerp met 'n beskikbaarheidsteekproef ($N = 156$) is gebruik. 'n Selfsaamgestelde vraelys, die Werkeise en Werkhulpbronne Skaal (JDRS), is gebruik om die unieke werkeise en werkhulpbronne in die versekeringsbedryf te meet. Benewens die JDRS is die Frankfurt Emosionele Arbeid Skaal-E (FEWS) en Werksverwante Vloei-skaal (WOLF) as metingsinstrumente gebruik.

Die resultate het getoon dat daar 'n mate van korrelasie is tussen werkeise en werkhulpbronne en hulle invloed op die ervaring van emosionele arbeid en werkverwante vloei. Dit dui verder aan dat die beskikbaarheid van sekere werkhulpbronne en die afwesigheid van werkeise voorspellers is van werkverwante vloei. In teenstelling daarmee dui die resultate ook aan dat

die aanwesigheid van werkeise en die gebrek aan werkhulpbronne in 'n mate voorspellers is van emosionele arbeid. Geen statisties betekenisvolle verskille is gevind tussen demografiese groepe en die ervaring van emosionele arbeid en werkverwante vloei nie.

Aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing is aan die hand gedoen.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This mini-dissertation deals with job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow in an Insurance industry call centre.

This chapter focuses on the problem statement, research objectives and research method. The chapter starts out with a problem statement, giving an overview of previous related research conducted on job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow, linking it with this research project and its research objectives. A discussion of the research method follows, with details regarding the empirical study, research design, study population, measuring instruments and statistical analysis. It concludes with a chapter summary giving an overview of the chapters that comprise this mini-dissertation.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Globally, the growth of call centres has been estimated at 6% for the next three years with the number of call centres growing from 110 000 to 130 000. Locally a similar trend has emerged. The number of call centres in South Africa is estimated to reach 939 by 2008 with about 100 000 jobs being created over the same period (http://www.capegateway.gov.za/other/2005/10/call_cen_business_process_outsourcing_paper). Currently around 80 000 people are employed by call centres. This rapid growth can be attributed to technological advances in integrated telephone computer technology, the convenience factor for consumers, and substantial cost reductions achieved by telephone service delivery in contrast to face-to-face contact in branches (Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000).

A call centre is a work environment in which the main business is mediated by computer and telephone-based technologies that enable the efficient distribution of incoming calls or allocation of outgoing calls to available staff, and permit customer-employee interaction to occur simultaneously with the use of display screen equipment and the instant access to, and inputting

of information (Holman, 2003). It facilitates remote human encounters between the end customer and the service firm employee via the telephone. Call centres are "tools" for organising communication with customers, with the help of telecommunication (Henn, Kruse & Strawe, 1996). The majority of call centres have been established to organise mass service for customers, and the work in call centres is characterised by routine work and low task control. Call centre employees are required to suggest a "friendly smile" when they are on the phone (Zapf, Isic, Bechtold & Blau, 2003).

Call centres seem to have the potential to completely replace face-to-face customer contacts through branch networks (Hawcroft & Beckett, 1993). Call centre agents are important for service organisations since they provide a link between the external customer environment and the internal operations of the organisation (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). They represent the company and directly influence the service quality perceptions of the customer.

Besides being managed and controlled by a relatively small number of managers and support staff, call centre agents' activities are often managed, measured and monitored by computer technology. According to Holman (2003) this can place enormous pressure on these employees. Although some employees enjoy call centre work, for others it is a demanding and stressful job (Holman, 2003). Their work is characterised by performing multiple tasks with frequent interruptions and repetitive movements while complex information is processed. It is also expected from them to have good communication skills and to be efficient while they work in noisy environments, usually under high time pressures. Some perceptions of call centre work include that it is boring, monotonous, demanding and stressful (Fernie & Metcalf, 1998). Call centres are also labelled as electronic sweatshops, electronic panopticans and the dark static mills of the twenty-first century (Fernie & Metcalf, 1998). Faced with a lot of job demands and in many cases little or no job resources, working in these conditions can sometimes have negative consequences for the organisation and the employee.

Job demands refer to those physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort, and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Bakker, Demerouti,

De Boer & Schaufeli, 2003). It may include high work pressure, role overload, emotional demands and poor environmental conditions. Job demands represent characteristics of the job that potentially evoke strain in cases where they exceed the employee's adaptive capability (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003). Job demands are however not necessarily negative, but may turn into stressors when meeting those demands requires high effort from which the employee has not adequately recovered (Meijman & Mulder, 1998).

Metz, Rothe and Degener (2001) analysed 37 Customer Service Representative jobs which lead them to criticise the poor decision latitude as well as the low complexity and high division of the work. Agents continuously had to repeat the same activities thereby scarcely having the opportunity to make use of their professional know-how. Most call centre employees working in the front office do not complete professional training for their telephone work (Baumgart et al., 2002). In order to prevent inexperienced agents from making mistakes, complexity of work is often massively restricted. Most calls are based on a predetermined script that agents are expected to follow strictly. Agents have very little autonomy and control over their work because they are not allowed to deviate from the predetermined message in order to meet customer demands. Having to use the same communication script approximately a hundred times a day leads to feelings of monotony and boredom (Wieland & Timm, 2004).

Job resources, on the other hand, refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that (1) are functional in achieving work goals; (2) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; or (3) stimulate person growth and development (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer et al., 2003). Resources may be located at the level of the organisation (e.g. salary, career opportunities, job security), interpersonal and social relations (e.g. supervisor and co-worker support, team climate), the organisation of work (e.g. role clarity, participation in decision making), and the task level (e.g. performance feedback, skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy).

Job demands and job resources are negatively related, since job demands such as high work pressure and emotionally demanding interactions with clients may preclude the mobilisation of

job resources. In the same manner high job resources may reduce job demands (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer et al., 2003).

To do his/her job, the call centre agent sits at a table in front of a computer, wearing a headset for communicating with the customer, leaving his/her hands free in order to input data into the computer when necessary. Depending on the business, a call centre agent talks to between 60 and 250 clients per eight-hour shift. The more customers talked to, the less time available for each of them and the more routine (and boring) these conversations may become for the agent (Dieckhoff, Freigang-Bauer, Schrőter & Viereck, 2002).

The ways call centres get in contact with customers may differ. Whereas inbound call centres are restricted to a passive role (i.e. being called up exclusively by customers having any questions or complaints concerning a product), outbound call centres actively engage in phoning people up, e.g. telemarketing call centres. From the company's point of view, the advantages of inbound and outbound call centres are manifold: lower costs in the area of field work because even sophisticated services may be rendered by the phone; and more satisfied customers because, ideally, the call centre can be contacted seven days a week, 24 hours a day (Henn et al., 1996)

The high rate of turnover and absenteeism in many call centres suggest that working in call centres is a stressful experience (Holman, 2003). Relatively short-cycle routine interactions with customers mostly controlled by automatic call distribution systems and supported by networked information technologies allow little control of when and whom to speak to. Moreover, agents are expected to always be friendly on the telephone – imposing emotional demands on the call centre agent (Holman, 2003). Isic, Dorman and Zapf (1999) compared the working conditions of 250 call centre employees to those in banks and administrative offices. While call centres did not stand out in terms of job stressors such as uncertainty, organisational problems, and time pressure, they were distinguished by very low task control and timing control. Agents also suffered significantly more from psychosomatic complaints than employees in banks and administrative offices.

Call centre agents cannot be assumed to always be in a good mood. Rather, they frequently encounter situations where anger is likely to be the dominant emotion (Deery, Iverson & Walsh, 2002). This may be the result of encountering difficult, disappointed and disruptive customers from time to time. It is important to diffuse the tension so that the situation can be resolved with minimum stress for both the agent and the customer. Employees must listen to try and understand the customer's point of view, even if the customer is being unreasonable (Crome, 1998).

A common stereotype regarding call centre work is that managing phone-based customer interactions all day is neither complicated nor demanding as most interactions are basic, simple, and scripted. Research has however shown that the work of call centre agents is very demanding with respect to various aspects (Holman, 2003). In order to do the job correctly, call centre agents have to perform several attention consuming, simultaneous subtasks such as controlling the call using sophisticated listening and questioning skills, operating a keyboard to input data into the system, reading often detailed information from a visual display unit, and speaking to customers. Furthermore, as many customers are subjected to long waiting periods their satisfaction is negatively affected and these tasks are thus often conducted under high time pressure. According to Wegge, Van Dick, Fisher, Wecking and Moltzen (2006), a call centre agent sometimes communicates with about 100 customers during a typical eight-hour shift. To also continuously keep track of whom you are speaking to, and the frequent readjustment to new customers is a further non-trivial attention requirement. More significantly, call centre agents are usually instructed to be friendly, enthusiastic, polite, and helpful to customers, even if customers are rude. This indicates further demands with respect to the volitional presentation of emotions in opposition to those being actually felt (Wegge et al., 2006). The impact of their work environment on their emotions can be linked to emotional labour.

Emotional labour refers to the management of human feelings during the execution of the labour process (Bolton, 2000). First defined as "feelings management", it is performed as part of paid work. Second, it is undertaken during the commercial interaction involving a direct encounter between employees and customers (Bolton, 2000). The product of emotional labour is the state of mind and the feelings of the customer. In practice this means that the employee must persuade

the customer to love the product and the enterprise. The third aspect of emotional labour entails the management of employees' own feelings as defined by enterprise needs, when they become the business ambassadors of their companies, magnifying the importance of performance during the employee/customer interaction (Bolton, 2000).

The expression of organisationally desired emotions is not an end in itself. Emotions are shown to have an influence on clients (Kruml & Geddes, 2000). Expressing emotions is one possible way to influence the client's emotions. To be able to do so, the accurate perception of the client's emotions, as well as the accurate identification of the emotional display required, is an important prerequisite. Hochschild (1983) argued that carrying out emotion work for long hours would overtax the employee's ability to show the desired emotions. They would go on smiling, but they would not feel the expected emotions. This discrepancy between displayed and felt emotions is called emotional dissonance, which in the long run, could lead to psychological ill health.

Emotion work could also have positive effects on psychological well-being. At the level of social interactions it can be argued that if agents successfully meet the requirement to display and sense emotions it will contribute to the feeling of self-efficacy or personal accomplishment (Bierhoff, 1990). The question that can be asked is what the factors are that motivate people to stay and to enjoy their work in an emotional labouring environment.

Previous research has shown that call centre agents responsible for outbound calls report less time pressure, more autonomy, and lower strain than agents working inbound only (Isic et al., 1999). Shah and Bandi (2003) also found that employees in call centres value the access to training and development programmes. Having access to such programmes is a real enrichment and benefit because many agents often receive little training before they start their job. In addition to this, Hackman and Oldham (1980) refer to specific job characteristics with motivational potential. Such job characteristics foster so-called critical psychological states (e.g. meaningfulness, job satisfaction and flow), which in turn, drive people's attitudes and behaviours. In this study the specific focus will be on work-related flow.

Flow has been conceptualised as a concept to describe the sense of effortless action in moments that stand out as the best in their lives (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). It is a state of consciousness where people become totally immersed in an activity, and enjoy it intensely (Salanova, Bakker & Llorens, 2006). According to Csikszentmihalyi (1975) the key to human happiness is loving one's everyday profession. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) describes flow therefore as the positive experiences created when challenges are congruent with the skills of the individual. The matching of personal skills and a meaningful challenge provides the experience of a deep sense of enjoyment and focused attention on an activity. People who have experienced flow want to replicate the activity, regardless of whether the activity provides material rewards or not. Individuals who frequently experience flow are more likely to have higher levels of motivation, concentration, better psychological and physical health. In addition, these people are also more alert, energetic, creative, competent and able to make sound decisions (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Bakker (2004) applied the concept of flow to the work situation, and defined work-related flow as a short-term peak experience at work that is characterised by absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation. *Absorption* refers to a state of total concentration, whereby employees are totally immersed in their work (Salanova et al., 2006). They forget about time and everything else around them. Employees who *enjoy* their work and feel happy make a very positive judgment about the quality of their working life. This enjoyment or happiness is the outcome of cognitive and affective evaluation of the flow experience (Salanova et al., 2006). Finally, *intrinsic work motivation* refers to the need to perform a certain work-related activity with the aim of experiencing the inherent pleasure and satisfaction in the activity. Flow is achieved when all levels of consciousness are in harmony with each other (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; 1988; 1993; 1997).

LeFevre (1988) suggested that individuals are more likely to experience flow at work than leisure due to the high-challenge and high-skill context of a work situation. Carli, Della Fave and Massimini (1988) found that there is a relationship between flow and well-being on and off the job. An important contributor to employees' level of intrinsic motivation seems to be job design (Judge, Bono & Locke, 2000). Complex, challenging jobs (characterised by skill variety,

identity, significance, feedback and high levels of autonomy) specifically tend to support and encourage higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Oldham & Cummings, 1996).

In South African studies, Le Roux (2005) found among a sample of employees working in the mining industry that job resources are a significant predictor of work-related flow. Swart (2006) found in a sample of call centre agents that job resources explain 38% of the variance in work-related flow, however this prediction was not statistically significant. No South African research could however be found on the relationship between emotional labour and work-related flow in call centres. It is therefore the aim of this research to determine whether such a relationship exists and to determine what the role of job demands and job resources would be on such a relationship.

This research will attempt to answer the following questions:

- How are job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow conceptualised from the literature?
- What is the relationship between job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow according to the literature?
- How valid and reliable are the measuring instruments of job characteristics, emotional labour, and work-related flow within an insurance industry call centre?
- What is the relationship between job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow within an insurance industry call centre?
- Can job resources and a lack of job demands predict work-related flow in an insurance industry call centre?
- Can job demands and a lack of job resources predict emotional labour in an insurance industry call centre?

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 General objective

The general objective of this research is to determine the relationship between job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow in an insurance industry call centre.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the research are:

- To conceptualise job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow from the literature.
- To determine the relationship between job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow according to the literature.
- To determine the construct validity and internal consistency of the measuring instruments of job characteristics (i.e. job demands and job resources), emotional labour and work-related flow.
- To determine the relationship between job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow for employees in an insurance industry call centre.
- To determine whether job demands and job resources can predict work-related flow in an insurance industry call centre.
- To determine whether job resources and the lack of job demands can predict emotional labour in an insurance industry call centre.
- To determine, based on demographic factors, the differences experienced in terms of emotional labour and work-related flow in an insurance industry call centre.
- To make recommendations for future research.

1.3 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method consists of a literature review and an empirical study.

1.3.1 Literature review

The literature review focuses on previous research on job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow. An overview is given of how job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow is conceptualised in the literature and the relationship between these constructs.

1.3.2 Empirical study

The empirical study consists of the research design, the participants, and the measuring battery.

1.3.2.1 Research design

A cross-sectional design with a survey as the data collection technique is used to achieve the research objectives. Cross-sectional designs are used to examine groups of subjects in various stages of development simultaneously, while a survey is a data-collection technique in which questionnaires are used to gather data about an identified population (Burns & Grove, 1993). Information collected is used to describe the population at that time. This design can also be used to assess interrelationships among variables within a population. According to Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997) this design is best suited to addressing the descriptive and predictive functions associated with the correlational design, whereby relationships between variables are examined.

1.3.2.2 Participants

The participants can be defined as an availability sample of employees working in different sectors in the insurance industry. A total population of 370 employees will be targeted in different call centres. Only 176 responses were obtained of which 156 responses (89%) could be utilised. The study population consisted mainly of male (57,05%), English-speaking (52,70%) employees between the ages of 20 and 29 (68,60%). The majority of the sample had a grade 12 (Std. 10) (62,40%) qualification, working as Broker Sales Consultants (27,9%).

1.3.2.3 Measuring battery

Three questionnaires will be administered in this study, namely the *Job Demands and Resources Scale* (JDRS) developed for the purpose of this study, the *Frankfurt Emotion Work Scales-E* (FEWS) (Zapf et al., 2005; Zapf, Vogt, Seifert, Mertini & Isic, 1999) and the *Work-Related Flow Scale* (WOLF) (Bakker, 2001).

A *biographical questionnaire* was developed to gather information about the demographical characteristics of the participants. Information to be gathered includes age, gender, race, home language, education, marital status and years employed in current position.

The *Job Demands and Resources Scal*e (JDRS) was developed for the purpose of this study to measure the unique job demands and job resources of employees in a call centre. Various demands and resources in call centres were identified through the use of focus groups. Based on the results, a unique job demands and resources scale was compiled. The items are measured on a four-point scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). Swart (2006) found that ten internally consistent factors could be extracted using the same sample to be used in the current study, explaining 52,83% of the total variance. Five of the 77 variables did not load on any of the factors. The factors were Resource Availability (α = 0,79); Pressure (α = 0,73); Work load (α = 0,52); Supervision (α = 0,91); Job Security (α = 0,88); Pay and Benefits (α = 0,87); Task Freedom (α = 0,68); Working Conditions (α = 0,68); Support (α = 0,84) and; Opportunity for Growth (α = 0,77).

The *Frankfurt Emotion Work Scales-E* (FEWS) (Zapf et al., 1999) is used to determine emotion work or emotional labour. For most of the FEWS scales there is a five-point response scale consisting of 1 (*very rarely/never*), 2 (*rarely/once a week*), 3 (*sometimes/once a day*), 4 (*often/several times a day*) and 5 (*very often/several times an hour*). It measures the display of emotions (positive, negative, neutral and certain emotions), demands for sensitivity, emotional sympathy, emotion control, interaction control, emotional dissonance, et cetera. Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0,61 to 0,91 for the different subscales were obtained (Zapf & Holz, 2006; Zapf et al., 2003)

The *Work-Related Flow Scale* (WOLF) (Bakker, 2001) is used to assess flow at work. The WOLF includes 13 items measuring absorption (four items), work enjoyment (four items), and intrinsic work motivation (six items). Examples are: "When I am working, I forget everything else around me" (absorption), "When I am working very intensely, I feel happy" (work enjoyment), and "I get my motivation from the work itself, and not from the rewards for it" (intrinsic work motivation). The participants are asked to indicate how often they had each of the experiences during the preceding week (0 = never, 6 = every day). Bakker (2004) found the following reliability results (Cronbach Alpha Coefficients): Absorption (0,80); Work enjoyment (0,90); and Intrinsic Work Motivation (0,75). In a South African study among employees in the mining industry, Le Roux (2005) found the following Cronbach alphas: Absorption (0,59), Work Enjoyment (0,84), and Intrinsic Work Motivation (0,71). In a study among call centre agents in the insurance industry Swart (2006) found that intrinsic motivation and work enjoyment loaded on one factor and absorption loaded on another. She obtained the following alpha coefficients: Flow (i.e. intrinsic motivation and work enjoyment) 0,92 and Absorption 0,88.

1.3.2.4 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis will be carried out with the help of the SPSS-programme (SPSS Inc., 2007). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) will be used to analyse the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients will be used to assess the internal consistency, homogeneity and unidimensionality of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha contains important information regarding the proportion of variance of the items of a scale in terms of the total variance explained by the particular scale.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients will be used to specify the relationship between the variables. In terms of statistical significance, it is decided to set the value at a 95% confidence interval level ($p \leq 0,05$). Effect sizes (Steyn, 1999) will be used to decide on the practical significance of the findings. A cut-off point of 0,30 (medium effect, Cohen, 1988) will be set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients. T-tests, ANOVAs and MANOVAs will be used to determine the differences between groups.

A multiple regression analysis will be conducted to determine the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is predicted by the independent variables. The effect size (which indicates practical significance) in the case of multiple regression is given by the following formula (Steyn, 1999):

$f^2 = R^2 / (1 - R^2)$

A cut-off point of 0,35 (large effect (Steyn, 1999)) will be set for the practical significance of f^2.

The value of R^2 will be used to determine the proportion of the total variance of the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables. The F-test will be used to test if a significant regression exists between the independent and dependent variables. Steyn (1999) suggested that effect size is used together with multiple regression, especially when working with a total population. Cohen (1988) suggested the following guidelines for effect size:

- $f^2 = 0,01$ – small effect
- $f^2 = 0,10$ – medium effect
- $f^2 = 0,35$ – large effect

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) will be used to determine the significance of differences between the levels of emotional labour and work-related flow of demographic groups. MANOVA tests whether or not mean differences among groups in a combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In MANOVA, a new dependent variable that maximises group differences was created from the set of dependent variables. Wilk's lambda will be used to test the likelihood of the data, on the assumption of equal population mean vectors for all groups, against the likelihood on the assumption that the population mean vectors were identical to those of the sample mean vectors for the different group. When an effect is significant in MANOVA, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be used to discover which dependent variables had been affected. Seeing that multiple ANOVAs will be used, a Bonferroni-type adjustment will be made for inflated Type I error. Tukey tests will be done to indicate which group differs significantly when ANOVAs are

performed.

1.4 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

The chapters are presented as follows in this mini-dissertation:

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Research article
Chapter 3: Conclusions and recommendations

1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Within this chapter an overview was given on the problem statement and research objectives. The measuring instruments and research method used in this research were explained, followed by a brief overview of the chapters that follow.

The empirical study will be discussed in Chapter 2.

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE

JOB CHARACTERISTICS, EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND WORK-RELATED FLOW IN AN INSURANCE INDUSTRY CALL CENTRE

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow of call centre agents in an insurance company. A cross-sectional design was used with an availability sample (N = 156). A self-constructed instrument, Job Demands and Resources Scale (JDRS) was used to measure the unique job demands and job resources in the insurance industry. In addition to the JDRS, the Frankfurt Emotion Work Scales-E (FEWS) and the Work-Related Flow Scale (WOLF) were used as measuring instruments. The presence of certain job resources and the absence of job demands predicted work-related flow to some extend while the presence of job demands and the absence of job resources also predicted the experience of emotional labour to some extend. There were no statistical significant correlations between demographic groups of employees regarding levels of emotional labour and work related flow.

OPSOMMING

Die doelwit van hierdie navorsing was om ondersoek in te stel na die verhouding tussen werkeienskappe, emosionele arbeid en werkverwante vloei van telefoniesehulpsentrum-agente binne 'n versekeringsfirma. 'n Dwarsdeursnee-ontwerp met 'n beskikbaarheidsteekproef (N = 156) is gebruik. 'n Selfsaamgestelde vraelys, Werkeise en –hulpbronne Skaal (JDRS) is gebruik om die unieke werkeise en werkhulpbronne in die versekeringsbedryf te meet. Benewens die JDRS is die Frankfurt Emosionele Arbeid Skaal-E (FEWS) en Werkverwante Vloei-skaal (WOLF) as metingsinstrumente gebruik. Die teenwoordigheid van seker werkhulpbronne en die afwesigheid van werkeise het tot 'n mate die ondervinding van werksverwante vloei voorspel. So ook het die teenwoordigheid van werkeise en die afwesigheid van werkhulpbronne die ervaring van emosionele arbeid tot 'n mate voorspel. Geen statisties betekenisvolle verskille is gevind tussen demografiese groepe en die ervaring van emosionele arbeid en werksverwante vloei nie.

Competing for customers has inspired companies to invent new ways of service delivery. One of these innovations is a call centre. The telephonic call centre provides customers with an alternative to paying a personal visit to an organisation, and offers a one-stop service (www.contactindustryhub.co.za). It enables personal contact without the high costs of one-on-one interaction. Call centres have been one of the few booming industries in recent years. Similarly, the contact centre and Business Process Outsourcing industry in South Africa has experienced unprecedented growth during recent years and estimates predict that as many as 100 000 direct and indirect jobs will be created in the sector by 2010 (www.contactindustryhub.co.za).

The quality of a call centre's services depends on the skills of its employees (Moller, Crous & Schepers, 2004). The call centre consultant should be knowledgeable about a wide range of aspects relating to his or her organisation, and has to be a skilled communicator. For many customers the call centre consultant represents the only direct contact with a representative of the organisation. As such the consultant has a profound influence on the customer's perception of the organisation (Moller et al., 2004). Taylor and Bain (1999) defined a call centre as a dedicated operation in which computer-utilising employees receive inbound, or make outbound, telephone calls, with those calls processed and controlled by an automatic call distribution (ACD) or predictive dialing system. The call centre is characterised by the integration of telephone and visual display unit technologies. A call centre can be used as an interface between customers and an organisation's systems in order to complete a well-specified transaction, to generate sales or to provide solutions to and advice on relatively complex and technical issues (Wallace, Eagleson & Waldersee, 2000).

The opposing goals of efficiency and excellent service are both central to call centres. High service levels are important since the number of "completely satisfied" customers is one of the few predictors of long term profitability (Jones & Sasser, 1995). Efficiency is important since call centres must provide speed of delivery and operate at a low unit cost to remain competitive. In a call center the tension between efficiency and service is more salient than in most service organisations. Technology is used to facilitate the physical concentration of staff, labour scheduling, staff monitoring and high productivity rates. The negative consequences that follow

this efficiency goal, such as exhaustion, stress and turnover are regretted and cause deep concern to management (Taylor & Bain, 1999).

Call center managers are able to track the number of calls per agent, the number of abandoned calls, the time taken to abandon, the average speed to answer calls, the occupancy rate of agents (the percentage of time agents handle calls versus waiting for calls to arrive) as well as the service level (percentage of calls answered within a prescribed time frame). In addition they are able to identify the call waiting longest in a queue, the agent who has been sitting idle the longest, which agents are on calls, on breaks or completing post call wrap up work and how long the wrap up work is taking on average. All of this information is available on a real time basis as well as in a cumulative report form (Robinson & Morley, 2005). Call center management speaks about a customer focus, yet the agents perceive a productivity focus. Agents are hired for their relations skills and motivation, yet work with a task and quantitative focus. What they like least about their jobs is the emphasis on productivity, which is management's main focus. What they like most is the interaction with their peers and with the customer, which is severely restricted due to the task focus. The effects of these tensions on the employee are high levels of emotional burnout, stress and high staff turnover (Wallace et al., 2000).

Besides being managed and controlled by a relatively small number of managers and support staff, call centre agents' activities are often managed, measured and monitored by computer technology. According to Holman (2003) this can place enormous pressure on these employees. Although some employees enjoy call centre work, for others it is a demanding and stressful job (Holman, 2003). Their work is characterised by performing multiple tasks with frequent interruptions and repetitive movements while complex information is processed. It is also expected from them to have good communication skills and to be efficient while they work in noisy environments usually under high time pressures. Some perceptions of call centre work include that it is boring, monotonous, demanding and stressful (Fernie & Metcalf, 1998). Call centres are also labelled as electronic sweatshops, electronic panopticans and the dark static mills of the twenty-first century (Fernie & Metcalf, 1998).

Recent studies also suggested that most jobs in call centres can be characterised as unskilled work, called an advanced form of Taylorism (Dieckhoff, Freigang-Bauer, Schröter & Viereck, 2002). Relatively short-cycle routine interactions with customers mostly controlled by automatic call distribution systems and supported by networked information technologies allow little control of when and whom to speak to (Holman, 2003). Richter and Schulze (2001) showed that call centre representatives have low levels of job control while Isic, Dorman and Zapf (1999) confirmed that low task control and timing control distinguished call centre jobs from other administrative jobs. Faced with a lot of job demands and in many cases little or no job resources, working in these conditions can sometimes have negative consequences for the organisation and the employee.

Job Characteristics

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model is a heuristic model that specifies how health impairment and motivation or involvement in any organisation may be produced by two specific sets of working conditions (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou & Kantas, 2003), namely job demands and job resources. This constitutes an overarching model that may be applied to various occupational settings, irrespective of the particular demands and resources involved. This happens especially when meeting job demands require high effort from employees while the employees may experience difficulty to adequately recover from these efforts.

Job demands represent characteristics of the job that potentially evoke strain, in cases where they exceed the employee's adaptive capability (Bakker et al., 2003). More specifically, job demands refer to those physical, social or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort on the part of the employee and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (e.g. exhaustion). Although job demands are not necessarily negative, they may turn into job stressors when meeting those demands requires high effort from which the employee has not adequately recovered (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). This happens especially when meeting job demands require high effort from employees while the employees may experience difficulty to adequately recover from these efforts.

In call centres typical job demands will include lack of job control, role stress, performance monitoring, inadequate coaching and training, emotional labour, and lack of team leader support. Holman (2003) argued that call centre agents use interactive display terminals during telephone calls and thus perform multiple tasks with frequent interruptions. Furthermore their jobs are characterised by repetitive movements, while complex information is processed. Meanwhile communication skills and efficiency are expected. In addition, call centre agents often work in noisy environments under high time pressure, and their performance is measured on line (Ferreira & Saldiva, 2002).

The second set of job characteristics concerns the extent to which the job offers resources to individual employees. Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that either/or: (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (2) are functional in achieving work goals; (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001). Examples of job resources, which may also be relevant to a call centre environment, are time control, performance feedback, a supportive leader, and trusting relationships with colleagues.

According to the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) the two sets of working conditions may each evoke a different process. First, badly designed jobs or high job demands (e.g. work overload, emotional demands) may exhaust employees' mental and physical resources and may therefore lead to the depletion of energy (i.e. a state of exhaustion) and to health problems. The presence of adequate job resources reduces job demands, fosters goal accomplishment and stimulates personal growth and development. In turn, this may lead to a stronger involvement in terms of organisational commitment and dedication to one's work, and thus to a lower intention to leave the organisation.

During face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions, many employees are also required to express appropriate emotions as a job requirement. Hochschild (1983) argued that in practically all social interactions, people tend to play roles and try to create certain impressions. Impressions include the display of normatively appropriate interactions in organisation. Morris and Feldman (1996) explained that employees are not only required to work on tasks and spend mental and physical

effort, they are also required to manage their emotions as part of their job. It is important to note that this is different from considering emotions as a reaction to the various conditions of the work environment. Rather, the focus is on emotions as a requirement of the job. Emotion work as part of the job implies that the desired emotions are required even in situations where the emotion is not actually felt. In this respect, emotional labour is defined as the effort, planning, and control needed to express organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions (Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Emotional Labour

Emotional labour possesses the following characteristics: (a) emotional labour occurs in face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with clients; (b) emotions are displayed to influence other people's emotions, attitudes and behaviours; and (c) the display of emotions has to follow certain rules (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Goffman (1959) suggested that in every social interaction people follow certain rules. Rules relating to the appropriate emotional expression are called display rules (Eckman, 1973). Display rules are norms and standards of behaviour indicating which emotions are appropriate in a given situation but also how these emotions should be publicly expressed. Many organisations, especially within the call centre environment, do not have explicit display rules as a part of the organisational culture or as part for their job descriptions, but they are sometimes incorporated in their mission statements (Eckman, 1973). Employers differ in their attempts to control and direct how employees display emotions to clients. In some cases, it is part of the supervisors' jobs to take care that display rules are observed (Zapf, 2002).

Hochschild (1983) described various psychological consequences of emotion work and argue that it is a far reaching form of human exploitation, even affecting workers' personalities. Based on qualitative empirical findings she maintained that showing emotions not felt at the moment would lead to the alienation of one's feelings which would cause psychological ill health. Morris and Feldman (1996) focused on the differentiation of various aspects of emotional labour, including the frequency of emotion display, the attentiveness to display rules required (referring

to the intensity and the duration of emotion display), the variety of emotions to be expressed and emotional dissonance which may have certain implications for individuals.

In terms of frequency, too frequent emotional displays would overtax the employees and lead to alienation and exhaustion (Hochschild, 1983). In terms of attentiveness, it is required to display rules. It was proposed by Morris and Feldman (1996) that the more attentiveness to display rules is required the more effort is demanded to carry out emotional labour. Scripts are cognitive schemata available in the long-term memory that comprise information to control routine behaviour (Schank & Abelson, 1977). If an interaction is very short, it is likely to be highly scripted. The effort involved in these interactions is lower with low intensity than in interactions of longer time periods where more intense emotions have to be displayed with less scripting (Morris & Feldman, 1996). In interactions with long duration, emotional labour is more effortful because it cannot be based on scripts and it is more likely that personal feelings occur because of a higher involvement in the interactions (Zapf, 2002). It may be more effortful to control the suppression of these feelings.

Intensity of emotional display refers to how strong an emotion has to be expressed (Morris & Feldman, 1996). It may also refer to which emotion is displayed and it is argued that displaying intense emotions is more effortful. Another concept of emotional labour is the variety of emotions required to be expressed (Morris & Feldman, 1996). The requirement to display emotions may be positive, neutral, or negative. Emotional labour is higher when a variety of emotions has to be displayed.

Based on Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotion management, Kruml and Geddes (2000) differentiated three emotion management strategies: automatic emotion regulation, surface acting and deep acting. Automatic emotion regulation refers to cases where required emotions are spontaneously and genuinely experienced by the employee. Processes under automatic control are typically perceived as effortless. Hochschild (1983) called such forms "passive deep acting".

Most emotion theorists propose that emotions consist of several subsystems (Scherer, 1997), namely subjective feelings, physiological reaction patterns and expressive behaviour, the latter

includes facial expression, voice and gesture. With reference to these concepts, surface acting means the employee tries to manage the visible aspects of emotions that appear on the surface and which can be noticed by the interaction partner to bring them in line with the organisational display rules while the inner feelings remain unchanged. Surface acting means that emotional dissonance exists between the inner feelings and the outer expression which persists during the interaction (Scherer, 1997).

Active deep acting is when individuals try to influence what they feel in order to become the role they are asked to display (Hochschild, 1983). During active deep acting not only the expressive behaviour but also the inner feelings are regulated. Active deep acting refers to the case where the employee has to spend effort to regulate emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). This will apply in cases where there are a need to actively strive to invoke thoughts, images, and memories to induce a certain emotion (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Deep acting may be required when surface acting appears too mechanical to satisfy customers' expectation of genuine interpersonal relationships.

Emotional dissonance occurs when an employee is required to express emotions which are not genuinely felt in a particular situation and is what was seen as problematic right from the beginning (Hochschild, 1983). Not being able to feel what one should feel may cause the individual to feel false and hypocritical and, in the long run, may lead to the alienation from one's own emotions, poor self-esteem, and depression.

Emotion work could also have positive effects on psychological well-being. At the level of social interactions it can be argued that if agents successfully meet the requirement to display and sense emotions it will contribute to the feeling of self-efficacy or personal accomplishment (Bierhoff, 1990). The question can be asked what the factors are that motivate people to stay and to enjoy their work in an emotional labouring environment. Within this study work-related flow will be investigated as a motivator for people that enhance their psychological well-being.

Work-related Flow

Flow experiences occur when we become engaged in controllable but challenging tasks or activities that require considerable skill and which are intrinsically motivating (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1998). For flow experiences to occur we must have a good chance of completing these tasks. There must be clear goals and immediate feedback. These tasks require total concentration so we become deeply and effortlessly involved in them, so much so that we no longer think of the worries and frustrations of everyday life (Carr, 2004). Our sense of self disappears when involved in these tasks and paradoxically the sense of self emerges as strengthened after the task is completed. Time perception is altered during flow experiences. Hours can pass in what seem to be minutes and minutes can seem like hours. The defining characteristics of activities that lead to flow experiences is that they become an end in themselves. While the tasks may initially be done for other reasons, ultimately they are done because they are intrinsically rewarding (Carr, 2004). Activities that lead to flow experiences are said to be 'autotelic'. Autotelic experiences are those that arise from activities which are not done for some anticipated future benefit but because the activity in itself is intrinsically and immediately rewarding (Carr, 2004).

Flow can also be defined as the state where people are engaged in an activity with high involvement, concentration and enjoyment, and where they experience an intrinsic interest and a sense of time distortion (Bakker, 2004). Work enjoyment in the definition of work-related flow, states that employees who enjoy their work and feel happy make a very positive judgment about the quality of their working life (Bakker, 2005).

To explain flow, Csikszentmihalyi (1975) proposed a three-channel flow model. He explained flow as a state of wellbeing, or optimal experience when both skills and challenges are matched. The degree of congruence ranged from high to low. Massimini and Carli (1988) expanded on this model and reformulated it to a four-channel flow model. They defined flow as a high skill, high challenge combination, where apathy is experienced when both skill and challenge are low.

Research by Massimini and Carli (1998) revealed that in order to experience flow, there must be a unity between challenge and skill and this needs to be above a critical threshold level. To remain in flow, one must increase the complexity of the activity by developing both new challenges and skills (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1998). At work, it is desirable to have a match between the individuals growing capabilities and increasing job responsibilities. When this is achieved, the individual is more likely to remain in flow in the longer term (Lu, 1999). Larson (1998) argued that it is the ability to structure experience to provide a balance between challenge and skill at a higher level of complexity that leads towards personal growth and discovery. This suggests that flow is an optimal experience that facilitates the fulfilment of individual potential (Percival, Crous & Schepers, 2003).

When challenges are higher than the individual's skill or ability, a sense of anxiety or stress is produced (Xie & Johns, 1995). Conversely, boredom is experienced when skills are higher than the challenge of the task (Privette, 1983). Flow is therefore poised between boredom and anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

In South African studies, Le Roux (2005) found among a sample of employees working in the mining industry that job resources are a significant predictor of work-related flow. Swart (2006) found in a sample of call centre agents that job resources explain 38% of the variance in work-related flow, however this prediction was not statistical significant. No South African research could however be found on the relationship between emotional labour and work-related flow in call centres. It is therefore the aim of this research to determine whether such a relationship exists and to determine what the role of job demands and job resources will be on such a relationship.

Based on the above, the following hypotheses are made.

H_1: There are practical and statistical significant correlations between job resources, job demands, emotional labour and work-related flow.

H_2: Job resources and the lack of job demands are significant predictors of work-related flow.

H_3: Job demands and the lack of job resources are significant predictors of emotional labour.

H_4: Differences between demographic groups of employees exist regarding levels of emotional labour and work-related flow.

METHOD

A cross-sectional design with a survey as the data collection technique is used to achieve the research objectives. Cross-sectional designs are used to examine groups of subjects in various stages of development simultaneously, while a survey is a data-collection technique in which questionnaires are used to gather data about an identified population (Burns & Grove, 1993). Information collected is used to describe the population at that time. This design can also be used to assess interrelationships among variables within a population. According to Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997) this design is best suited to addressing the descriptive and predictive functions associated with the correlational design, whereby relationships between variables are examined.

1.3.2.2 Participants

The participants could be defined as an availability sample of employees working in different sectors in the insurance industry. A total population of 370 employees was targeted in different call centres. Only 176 responses were obtained of which 156 responses (89%) could be utilised.

Descriptive information of the sample is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Participants

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	89	57,05
	Female	67	42,95
Age	20 – 29 yrs	109	70,35
	30 – 39 yrs	36	23,56
	40 – 49 yrs	5	3,21
	50 – 59 yrs	3	1,92
Race	White	40	25,64
	African	44	28,21
	Coloured	36	23,08
	Indian	32	20,51
	Other	4	2,56
Language	Afrikaans	26	16,66
	English	82	52,56
	Sepedi	9	5,77
	Sesotho	14	8,97
	Setswana	5	3,85
	siSwati	3	1,92
	isiXhosa	9	5,77
	isiZulu	6	3,85
	Xitsonga	1	0,64
Position	Broker Sales Consultant	43	27,56
	Direct Sales Consultant	27	17,30
	Claims Consultant	20	12,82
	Policy Services Consultant	32	20,60
	Retention Consultant	34	21,80
Qualification	Less than grade 10	6	3,85
	Grade 10 (Std 8)	3	1,92
Qualification	Grade 11 (Std 9)	4	2,56
	Grade 12 (Std. 10)	94	60,26
	Technikon Diploma	16	10,25
	Technical College Diploma	15	9,62
	University Degree	8	5,13
	Postgraduate Degree	2	1,28
	Other	8	5,13

The participants consisted mainly of male (57,05%), English-speaking (52,56%) employees between the ages of 20 and 29 (70,35%). The majority of the sample had a grade 12 (Std. 10) (60,26%) qualification, and were working as Broker Sales Consultants (27,56%).

Measuring battery

The following measurement instruments were used in the empirical study:

A *biographical questionnaire* was developed to gather information about the demographical characteristics of the participants. Information gathered included age, gender, race, home language, education, marital status and years employed in current position.

The *Job Demands and Resources Scale* (JDRS) was developed for the purpose of this study to measure the unique job demands and job resources of employees in a call centre. Various demands and resources in call centres were identified through the use of focus groups. Based on the results, a unique job demands and resources scale was compiled. The items were measured on a four-point scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). Swart (2006) found that ten internally consistent factors could be extracted using the same sample as used in this study, explaining 52,83% of the total variance. Five of the 77 variables did not load on any of the factors. The factors were Resource Availability (α = 0,79); Pressure (α = 0,73); Work load (α = 0,52); Supervision (α = 0,91); Job Security (α = 0,88); Pay and Benefits (α = 0,87); Task Freedom (α = 0,68); Working Conditions (α = 0,68); Support (α = 0,84); and Opportunity for Growth (α = 0,77).

The *Frankfurt Emotion Work Scales-E* (FEWS) (Zapf, Vogt, Seifert, Mertini & Isic, 1999) was used to determine emotion work or emotional labour. For most of the FEWS scales there was a five-point response scale ranging from 1 (*very rarely/never*), 2 (*rarely/once a week*), 3 (*sometimes/once a day*), 4 (*often/several times a day*) and 5 (*very often/several times an hour*). It measures the display of emotions (positive, negative, neutral and certain emotions), demands for sensitivity, emotional sympathy, emotion control, interaction control, emotional dissonance, etc. Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0,61 to 0,91 for the different subscales were obtained (Zapf & Holz, 2006; Zapf, Isic, Bechtold & Blau, 2003). In a study conducted by Zapf and Holz (2006), specifically for the call centre environment, the neutral emotions and certain emotions aspects of the display of emotions section have been discarded. The same applied in this study.

The *Work-Related Flow Scale* (WOLF) (Bakker, 2001) was used to assess flow at work. The WOLF includes 13 items measuring absorption (4 items), work enjoyment (4 items), and intrinsic work motivation (6 items). Examples are: "When I am working, I forget everything else around me" (absorption), "When I am working very intensely, I feel happy" (work enjoyment), and "I get my motivation from the work itself, and not from the rewards for it" (intrinsic work motivation). The participants were asked to indicate how often they had each of the experiences during the preceding week (0 = never, 6 = every day). Bakker (2004) found the following reliability results: Absorption (0,80); Work enjoyment (0,90); and Intrinsic Work Motivation (0,75). In a South African study among employees in the mining industry, Le Roux (2005) found the following Cronbach alphas: Absorption (0,59), Work Enjoyment (0,84), and Intrinsic Work Motivation (0,71).

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out with the help of the SPSS-programme (SPSS Inc., 2007). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used to analyse the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency, homogeneity and unidimensionality of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha contains important information regarding the proportion of variance of the items of a scale in terms of the total variance explained by the particular scale.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationship between the variables. In terms of statistical significance, it was decided to set the value at a 95% confidence interval level ($p \leq 0,05$). Effect sizes (Steyn, 1999) were used to decide on the practical significance of the findings. A cut-off point of 0,30 (medium effect, Cohen, 1988) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the proportion of variance in the dependant variable that was predicted by the independent variables. The effect size (which indicates practical significance) in the case of multiple regression was given by the following formula (Steyn, 1999):

$f^2 = R^2 / (1 - R^2)$

A cut-off point of 0,35 (large effect (Steyn, 1999)) was set for the practical significance of f^2. The value of R^2 was used to determine the proportion of the total variance of the dependant variable that was explained by the independent variables. The F-test was used to test if a significant regression exists between the independent and dependent variables. Steyn (1999) suggested that effect size was used together with multiple regressions, especially when working with a total population. Cohen (1988) suggested the following guidelines for effect size:

- $f^2 = 0,01$ – small effect
- $f^2 = 0,10$ – medium effect
- $f^2 = 0,35$ – large effect

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine the significance of differences between the levels of emotional labour and work-related flow of demographic groups. MANOVA tests whether or not mean differences among groups in a combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In MANOVA, a new dependent variable that maximises group differences was created from the set of dependent variables. Wilk's lambda was used to test the likelihood of the data, on the assumption of equal population mean vectors for all groups, against the likelihood on the assumption that the population mean vectors were identical to those of the sample mean vectors for the different group. When an effect was significant in MANOVA, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to discover which dependent variables had been affected. Seeing that multiple ANOVAs were used, a Bonferroni-type adjustment was made for inflated Type I error. Tukey tests were done to indicate which group differed significantly when ANOVAs were performed.

RESULTS

Swart (2006) did a simple principle component analysis on the 77 items of the JDRS on the total sample of call centre representative in the insurance industry. Analysis of the eigenvalues (larger

that 1) and the scree plot indicated that ten factors could be extracted, explaining 52,83% of the total variance. Principle axis factoring analysis followed, using a direct oblimin rotation to carry out factor analysis.

Ten internally consistent factors were extracted, explaining 52,83% of the total variance. Five of the 77 variables did not load on any of the factors.

The first factor labelled *Supervision* has items loading on it that relate to supervision in the work environment. It involved mainly the receiving of sufficient information regarding work results, purpose of work and work performance, clear expectations from superiors, and relationship with immediate supervisor. The second factor was labelled *Pressure,* and included aspects such as adequate staff numbers to execute the work, working under time pressure, adequate time allocated to getting the job done, the amount of work to be done, and having to meet targets that seem impossible or unrealistic. *Pay and Benefits* as the third factor included perceptions of pay, the ability to progress financially, opportunity to be promoted, and the benefits provided by the organisation. The fourth factor was labelled *Task Freedom,* and included factors such as having to work socially undesirable and irregular hours, the freedom to carry out work activities, the freedom to decide how to carry out work, influence over decisions about when a piece of work must be completed, freedom to decide how much time to allocate to a certain task, responsibility for problem solving in work, determining the content of work, and influence in the planning of work activities.

The items that loaded on the fifth factor – labelled *Workload* – included aspects such as the requirement to work very hard, occurrence of long periods of intense concentration on the task, how hectic the job is, the need to adhere to certain standards and regulations (i.e. legal aspects, code of conduct, statutory regulations, etc.), and whether the working environment is stressful. The sixth factor was labelled *Resources Availability.* The items that loaded on this factor included aspects such as the availability of adequate resources, material (i.e. equipment) availability when needed, the availability of the right resources (i.e. material/equipment/labour) to complete daily tasks, material issued on time, and whether work performance is affected by 'red tape'. The seventh factor was *Job Security* and reflected participants' indication that they

would still be working in one year's time and would keep the current level of functioning; and that they need to be more secure in keeping their current job in the next year.

The items that loaded on the eighth factor – labelled *Opportunity for Growth* – included aspects such as sufficient demands on all skills and capacities, opportunities available for personal growth and development, feeling able to achieve something, and being provided with the possibility of independent thought and action. *Working Conditions* as the ninth factor included factors that affected the working conditions, such as uncontrollable events in the working environment, health and security risks, crisis and conflict situations, communication barriers with co-workers, dangerous, and unsafe working conditions. Finally, the tenth factor was labelled *Support.* The items that loaded on this factor included aspects such as relying on colleagues when facing difficulties at work, asking colleagues for help, receiving adequate and sufficient technical support to complete tasks, and getting on well with colleagues.

A second-order factor analysis was performed on the ten factors of the JDRS. Two factors were extracted, explaining 46,85% of the total variance. These two factors were labelled Job Resources (consisting of Supervision, Opportunity for Growth, Task Freedom, Pay and Benefits, Resource Availability, and Support) and Job Demands (consisting of Pressure, Working Conditions, Workload, and Job Security) (Swart, 2006).

A simple principle component analysis was conducted on the selected 21 items of the FEWS on the total sample of call centre representatives in the insurance industry. Analyses of the eigenvalues (larger than 1) and the scree plot indicated that three factors could be extracted, explaining 42,06% of the total variance. Principle axis factoring analysis followed, using a direct oblimin rotation to carry out factor analysis.

The results of the factor analysis on the FEWS are shown in Table 2. Loading of variables on factors, communalities and percentage of variance are shown. Variables are ordered and grouped by size of loading to facilitate interpretation. Labels for each factor are suggested in a footnote.

Table 2

Factor Loadings, Communalities (h^2), and Percentage Variance for Principal Factors Extraction and Direct Oblimin Rotation on FEWS Items

Item	F_1	F_1	F_1	h^2
ES2 – How often is of importance in your job to know how the clients are feeling at the moment?	0,76	0,00	0,00	0,56
EP5 – How often do you yourself have to come across as being in a positive mood when dealing with clients (i.e. cheerful)?	0,72	0,00	0,00	0,64
EP2 – How often in your job do you have to put clients in a positive mood (i.e. pleasing somebody)?	0,71	0,00	0,00	0,52
ES3 – How often is it necessary in your job to put yourself into your clients' place?	0,66	0,00	0,00	0,44
EP3 – How often in your job do you have to display, according to the situation, differing positive emotions towards clients (i.e. friendliness and enthusiasm and hope etc.)?	0,54	0,00	0,00	0,33
ES1 – How often is it necessary in your job to empathize with the clients' emotions?	0,51	0,00	0,00	0,39
EP1 – How often in your job do you have to display pleasant emotions towards clients (i.e. friendliness or kindness)?	0,51	0,00	0,00	0,28
EV5 – How often do you yourself have to come across as being in a negative mood when dealing with clients (i.e. angry)?	0,00	0,57	0,00	0,42
EV1 – How often in your job do you have to display unpleasant emotions towards clients (i.e. strictness or anger if rules are not followed)?	0,00	0,56	0,00	0,32
EV3 – How often in your job do you have to display, according to the situation, differing negative emotions towards clients (i.e. anger and disappointment and strictness etc.)?	0,00	0,49	0,00	0,29
EV4 – Person A has to display – if any – only very superficial negative feelings towards clients (i.e. superficial strictness). Person B must, in addition, also display intensive negative feelings towards clients (i.e. strong anger). Which one of these two jobs is most similar to yours?	0,00	0,44	0,00	0,21
EV2 – How often in your job do you have to put clients in a negative mood (i.e. unsettle / alarm)?	0,00	0,39	0,00	0,22
EV6 – Person A expresses mainly positive or neutral feelings towards clients. Person B expresses positive and negative feelings towards clients. Which one of these two jobs is most similar to yours?	0,00	0,35	0,00	0,17
ED5 – How often in your job do you have to display emotions that do not agree with your true feelings?	0,00	0,00	-0,80	0,61
ED4 – How often in your job do you have to display pleasant emotions? (i.e. friendliness) or unpleasant emotions (i.e. strictness) on the outside while actually feeling indifferent inside?	0,00	0,00	-0,69	0,51
ED3 – How often in your job do you have to display emotions that do not agree with your actual feelings towards the clients?	0,00	0,00	-0,57	0,37
ED1 – How often in your job do you have to suppress emotions in order to appear "neutral" on the outside?	0,00	0,00	-0,50	0,37
Percentage of Variance	20,77	12,98	8,31	

F_1 Positive Emotions F_2 Negative Emotions F_3 Emotional Dissonance

Three internally consistent factors were extracted, explaining 42,06% of the total variance. Four of the 21 variables did not load on any of the factors.

The first factor labelled *Positive Emotions* has items loading on it that relate to supervision in the work environment. It involved mainly the receiving of sufficient information regarding work results, purpose of work and work performance, clear expectations from superiors, and relationship with immediate supervisor. The second factor was labelled *Negative Emotions,* and included aspects such as the display of emotions that are inconsistent with actual feelings as well as managing the emotions of clients to facilitate desired results. The last factor was labelled *Emotional Dissonance.* This factor involved factors relating to the display of emotions which are not in agreement with actual felt emotions.

Swart (2006) conducted a simple principle component analysis on the 14 items of the WOLF on the total sample of call centre representatives in the insurance industry. Analysis of the eigenvalues (larger than 1) and the scree plot indicated that two factors could be extracted, explaining 63,92% of the total variance. These factors were labelled Absorption and Flow (consisting of Work Enjoyment and Intrinsic Work Motivation).

The descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients of the measuring instruments, namely the JDRS, FEWS and the WOLF, are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Coefficients of the JDRS, FEWS, and the WOLF

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
JDRS					
Resource Availability	18,91	3,34	-0,22	-0,69	0,79
Pressure	23,10	4,98	0,34	-0,28	0,73
Work Load	20,38	3,55	-0,24	-0,16	0,52
Supervision	28,73	7,11	-0.,33	-0,87	0,91
Job Security	8,07	2,91	-0,10	-1,17	0,88
Pay and Benefits	13,63	4,80	0,32	-0,64	0,87
Task Freedom	29,41	5,74	0,09	-0,05	0,68
Working Conditions	10,82	3,25	1,11	1,57	0,68
Support	14,18	3,45	-0,08	-0,50	0,84
Opportunity for Growth	10,43	2,83	0,11	-0,41	0,77
FEWS					
Positive Emotions	21,69	4,39	-0,07	-0,59	0,78
Negative Emotions	14,10	3,32	0,44	0,03	0,70
Emotional Dissonance	46,81	13,84	-0,88	0,27	0,93
WOLF					
Absorption	16,70	6,65	-0,18	-1,08	0,88
Flow	36,51	13,50	-0,01	-0,99	0,92

Table 3 indicates that acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients varying from 0,70 to 0,93 were obtained, except for Work Load (0,52). These alpha coefficients compare reasonably well with the guideline of 0,70 (0,55 in basic research), demonstrating that a large portion of the variance is explained by the dimensions (internal consistency of the dimensions) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). It is evident from Table 3 that most of the scales of the measuring instruments have relatively normal distributions.

The product-moment correlation coefficients between job demands, job resources, emotional labour and work-related flow are given in Table 4.

Table 4

Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients between the JDRS, FEWS, and WOLF

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Absorption	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
2. Flow	0,80*++	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
3. Resource Availability	0,20*	0,23*	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
4. Pressure	-0,13	-0,23	-0,23*	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
5. Work Load	0,09	-0,05	-0,02	0,30*	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
6. Supervision	0,36*+	0,44*+	0,31*+	-0,21*	0,03	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
7. Job Security	0,07*	0,11*	0,01	0,13	0,11	0,05	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
8. Pay and Benefits	0,34*+	0,51*++	0,22*	-0,23*	0,03	0,40*+	0,10	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
9. Working Conditions	0,14*	0,14	-0,19*	0,32*+	0,23*	-0,02	0,11	0,07	.	.	.	.	.	.
10. Support	0,01	0,11	0,24*	-0,13	0,07	0,41*+	-0,01	0,19*	-0,07	.	.	.	.	.
11. Opportunity for Growth	0,36*+	0,51*++	0,23*	0,01	0,20*	0,58*++	0,08	0,45*+	0,12	0,27*	.	.	.	.
12. Task Freedom	0,39*+	0,41*+	0,28*	-0,03	0,12	-0,58*++	0,13	0,38*+	0,10	0,09	0,69*++	.	.	.
13. Positive Emotions	0,20*	0,13	-0,01	-0,03	0,23*	0,09	-0,03	0,03	0,07	0,07	0,01	0,02	.	.
14. Negative Emotions	-0,13	-0,09	-0,27*	0,21*	-0,08	-0,03	0,10	-0,13	0,23*	-0,07	0,05	0,01	-0,22*	.
15. Emotional Dissonance	-0,09	-0,20*	-0,12	-0,02	0,13	0,03	-0,06	-0,19*	-0,13	0,13	-0,15	-0,22*	0,33*+	0,07

* $p \leq 0,05$ – statistically significant

+ $r > 0,30$ – practically significant (medium effect)

++ $r > 0,50$ – practically significant (large effect)

Table 4 shows statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, large effect) between absorption and flow and statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, medium effect) between absorption, supervision, pay and benefits, opportunity for growth, and task freedom. There is statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, large effect) between flow, pay and benefits, and opportunity for growth and statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, medium effect) between flow, supervision and task freedom. Resource availability had a statistically significant positive correlation (practically significant, medium effect) with supervision. Pressure had a significantly positive correlation (practically significant, medium effect) with working conditions.

Supervision had a statistically significant positive correlation (practically significant, large effect) with opportunity for growth and a statistically significant negative correlation (practically significant, large effect) with task freedom. Supervision had statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, medium effect) with pay and benefits and support. Pay and benefits had statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, medium effect) with opportunity for growth and task freedom. Opportunity for growth had a statistically significant positive correlation (practically significant, large effect) with task freedom. Positive emotions had a statistically significant positive correlation (practically significant, medium effect) with emotional dissonance.

Based on the above, hypothesis 1 is only partially accepted as not all the factors of job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow correlated with one another.

The results of a multiple regression analysis with work-related flow (i.e. absorption and flow) as dependent variable and job resources and job demands as independent variables are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Analyses with Work-related Flow as dependent variable

	Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	*t*	*p*	*F*	*R*	R^2	ΔR^2
		B	SE	Beta						
				Dependent Variable: Absorption						
1	(Constant)	2,26	3,55		0,64	0,53	7,45*	0,48	0,23	0,23
	Supervision	0,18	0,10	0,19	1,82	0,07				
	Opportunities for growth	0,20	0,25	0,08	0,77	0,44				
	Task Freedom	0,17	0,13	0,15	1,36	0,18				
	Pay and Benefits	0,26	0,11	0,19	2,24	0,03				
	Resource Availability	0,16	0,16	0,08	1,00	0,32				
	Support	-0,29	0,16	-0,15	-1,83	0,07				
2	(Constant)	0,76	5,15		0,15	0,88	4,98*	0,51	0,26	0,03
	Supervision	0,17	0,10	0,18	1,74	0,08				
	Opportunities for growth	0,17	0,26	0,07	0,66	0,51				
	Task Freedom	0,16	0,13	0,14	1,28	0,20				
	Pay and Benefits	0,21	0,12	0,15	1,80	0,07				
	Resource Availability	0,18	0,16	0,09	1,14	0,26				
	Support	-0,30	0,16	-0,15	-1,85	0,07				
	Pressure	-0,16	0,11	-0,12	-1,37	0,17				
	Work Load	0,12	0,15	0,07	0,83	0,41				
	Working Conditions	0,29	0,16	0,14	1,77	0,08				
	Job Security	0,04	0,17	0,02	0,22	0,83				
				Dependent Variable: Flow						
1	(Constant)	2,75	6,43		0,43	0,67	15,76*	0,62	0,39	0,39
	Supervision	0,34	0,18	0,18	1,95	0,05				
	Opportunities for growth	1,43	0,46	0,30	3,10	0,00				
	Task Freedom	-0,09	0,23	-0,04	-0,37	0,71				
	Pay and Benefits	0,92	0,21	0,33	4,47	0,00				
	Resource Availability	0,30	0,28	0,07	1,07	0,28				
	Support	-0,47	0,29	-0,12	-1,63	0,11				
2	(Constant)	13,38	9,10		1,47	0,14	11,29*	0,66	0,44	0,05
	Supervision	0,27	0,17	0,14	1,56	0,12				
	Opportunities for growth	1,65	0,46	0,35	3,58	0,00				
	Task Freedom	-0,10	0,23	-0,04	-0,44	0,66				
	Pay and Benefits	0,76	0,21	0,27	3,67	0,00				
	Resource Availability	0,31	0,28	0,08	1,09	0,28				
	Support	-0,42	0,28	-0,11	-1,51	0,13				
	Pressure	-0,46	0,20	-0,17	-2,28	0,02				
	Work Load	-0,41	0,26	-0,11	-1,58	0,12				
	Working Conditions	0,68	0,29	0,16	2,37	0,02				
	Job Security	0,32	0,30	0,07	1,07	0,29				

* $p < 0,05$

Table 5 shows that 23% of the variance explained in absorption is predicted by job resources (F = 7,45, p<0,05). The only significant predictor of absorption was pay and benefits. When job demands were added into the multiple regression analysis the statistical significance of R^2 increased. Table 5 shows that 26% of the variance explained in absorption is predicted by job resources and job demands (F = 4,98, p<0,05). There were however no significant predictors of absorption.

Table 5 also shows that 39% of the variance explained in flow is predicted by job resources (F = 15,76, p<0,05). The only significant predictors of flow were opportunities for growth and pay and benefits. When job demands were added into the multiple regression analysis the statistical significance of R^2 increased. Table 5 shows that 44% of the variance explained in flow is predicted by job resources and job demands (F = 11,29, p<0,05). The only significant predictors of flow were opportunities for growth, pay and benefits, pressure and working conditions. Hypothesis 2 is therefore only partially accepted as not all the job characteristics are significant predictors of work-related flow.

The results of a multiple regression analysis with emotional labour (i.e. positive emotions, negative emotions and emotional dissonance) as dependent variable and job demands and job resources as independent variables are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Analyses with Emotional Labour as dependent variable

	Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	p	F	R	R^2	ΔR^2
		B	SE	Beta						
				Dependent Variable: Positive Emotions						
1	(Constant)	22,54	2,81		8,02	0,00	2,63*	0,26	0,07	0,07
	Pressure	-0,12	0,09	-0,11	-1,29	0,20				
	Work Load	0,37	0,12	0,25	3,0.3	0,00				
	Working Conditions	0,08	0,14	0,05	0,62	0,54				
	Job Security	-0,09	0,14	-0,05	-0,65	0,52				
2	(Constant)	21,43	4,43		4,84	0,00	1,26	0,28	0,08	0,02
	Pressure	-0,09	0,10	-0,09	-0,96	0,34				
	Work Load	0,38	0,13	0,26	3,05	0,00				

Table 6 (continue)

Multiple Regression Analyses with Emotional Labour as dependent variable

	Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	*t*	*p*	*F*	*R*	R^2	ΔR^2
	Working Conditions	0,09	0,14	0,06	0,63	0,53				
	Job Security	-0,10	0,15	-0,05	-0,66	0,51				
	Supervision	0,09	0,09	0,12	1,07	0,29				
	Opportunities for growth	-0,24	0,22	-0,13	-1,07	0,29				
	Task Freedom	0,02	0,11	0,02	0,14	0,89				
	Pay and Benefits	0,01	0,10	0,01	0,06	0,96				
	Resource Availability	-0,06	0,14	-0,04	-0,43	0,67				
	Support	0,05	0,14	0,04	0,39	0,70				
	Dependent Variable: Negative Emotions									
1	(Constant)	9,09	1,91		4,76	0,00	4,58*	0,33	0,11	0,11
	Pressure	0,14	0,06	0,19	2,28	0,02				
	Work Load	-0,19	0,08	-0,19	-2,34	0,02				
	Working Conditions	0,23	0,09	0,20	2,46	0,02				
	Job Security	0,09	0,10	0,07	0,89	0,38				
2	(Constant)	14,35	2,91		4,93	0,00	3,18*	0,42	0,18	0,07
	Pressure	0,09	0,06	0,12	1,34	0,18				
	Work Load	-0,20	0,08	-0,20	-2,42	0,02				
	Working Conditions	0,19	0,09	0,17	2,09	0,04				
	Job Security	0,11	0,10	0,09	1,12	0,26				
	Supervision	0,02	0,06	0,04	0,39	0,70				
	Opportunities for growth	0,20	0,15	0,16	1,37	0,17				
	Task Freedom	0,00	0,07	0,00	-0,00	1,00				
	Pay and Benefits	-0,12	0,07	-0,16	-1,77	0,08				
	Resource Availability	-0,25	0,09	-0,23	-2,79	0,01				
	Support	-0,01	0,09	-0,01	-0,06	0,95				
	Dependent Variable: Emotional Dissonance									
1	(Constant)	11,92	1,93		6,19	0,00	1,93	0,22	0,05	0,05
	Pressure	-0,0,	0,06	-0,01	-0,16	0,88				
	Work Load	0,18	0,08	0,18	2,11	0,04				
	Working Conditions	-0,18	0,09	-0,16	-1,93	0,06				
	Job Security	-0,07	0,10	-0,05	-0,68	0,50				
2	(Constant)	15,49	2,84		5,45	0,00	3,12*	0,42	0,18	0,13
	Pressure	-0,03	0,06	-0,04	-0,49	0,62				
	Work Load	0,20	0,08	0,21	2,51	0,01				
	Working Conditions	-0,15	0,09	-0,14	-1,66	0,10				
	Job Security	-0,12	0,09	-0,02	-0,19	0,85				
	Supervision	0,13	0,05	0,25	2,31	0,02				
	Opportunities for growth	-0,09	0,14	-0,08	-0,66	0,51				
	Task Freedom	-0,14	0,07	-0,23	-1,99	0,05				
	Pay and Benefits	-0,12	0,07	-0,16	-1,81	0,07				

Table 6 (continue)

Multiple Regression Analyses with Emotional Labour as dependent variable

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	p	F	R	R^2	ΔR^2
Resource Availability	-0,15	0,09	-0,14	-1,66	0,10				
Support	0,11	0,09	0,11	1,23	0,22				

* $p< 0, 05$

Table 6 shows that 7% of the variance explained in positive emotions are predicted by job demands ($F = 7,63$, $p<0,05$). The only significant predictor of positive emotions was work load. When job resources were added into the multiple regression analysis the value of R^2 increased, however the variance explained in positive emotions were not statistical significant.

Table 6 also shows that 11% of the variance explained in negative emotions are predicted by job demands ($F = 4,58$, $p<0,05$). The only significant predictors of negative emotions were pressure, work load and working conditions. Table 6 indicates that 18% of the variance explained in negative emotions are predicted by job demands and job resources ($F = 3,18$, $p<0,05$). The only significant predictors of negative emotions were work load, working conditions and the availability of resources.

Table 6 shows that 5% of the variance in emotional dissonance are predicted by job demands but this prediction is not statistical significant. When job resources were added into the multiple regression analysis the value of R^2 increased. Table 6 indicates that 18% of the variance in emotional dissonance are predicted by job demands and job resources ($F = 3,12$, $p<0,05$). The only significant predictors of emotional dissonance were work load, and supervision. Hypothesis 3 is therefore only partially accepted as not all the job characteristics are significant predictors of emotional labour.

MANOVA analysis was conducted to determine differences between demographic groups (such as gender, racial and language groups, position, personnel area and education levels) in the experience of emotional labour. Results were first analysed for statistical significance using

Wilk's Lambda statistics. ANOVA was used to determine specific difference whenever statistical differences were found. The results of the MANOVA analysis are given in Table 7.

Table 7

MANOVA – Differences in emotional labour

Variable	Value	*F*	*Df*	*p*	Partial Eta squared
Gender	0,98	1,04	3,00	0,38	0,02
Racial Groups	0,89	1,53	12,00	0,12	0,04
Language Groups	0,83	1,19	24,00	0,25	0,06
Position	0,84	1,76	15,00	0,04*	0,06
Personnel Area	0,82	1,11	24,00	0,33	0,06
Education levels	0,94	0,37	24,00	1,00	0,02

* $p < 0,05$

In analysis of Wilk's Lambda values, statistically significant differences ($p<0,05$) regarding positive and negative emotions and emotional dissonance could be found in terms of position. In order to determine whether there are differences in the experience of positive and negative emotions and emotional dissonance, an adjusted statistical significance level was determined by taking the current statistical significant level ($p<0,05$) and dividing it with the amount of dependable variables. The adjusted significance level was therefore set at 0,02. None of the positions met this requirement with a significance lower than 0,02. No statistically significant differences ($p<0,05$) were found for gender, racial groups, language groups, personnel area and education levels.

MANOVA analysis was also conducted to determine differences between demographic groups (such as gender, racial and language groups, position, personnel area and education levels) in the experience of work-related flow. Results were first analysed for statistical significance using Wilk's Lambda statistics. ANOVA was used to determine specific difference whenever statistical differences were found. The results of the MANOVA analysis are given in Table 8.

Table 8

MANOVA – Differences in work-related flow

Variable	Value	*F*	*Df*	*p*	Partial Eta squared
Gender	0,99	0,44	2,00	0,65	0,01
Racial Groups	0,85	3,11	8,00	0,00*	0,08
Language Groups	0,91	0,91	16,00	0,56	0,05
Position	0,97	0,50	10,00	0,89	0,02
Personnel Area	0,94	0,51	16,00	0,94	0,03
Education levels	0,90	1,01	16,00	0,45	0,05

* $p < 0,05$

In analysis of Wilk's Lambda values, statistically significant differences ($p<0,05$) regarding absorption and flow could be found in terms of racial groups. In order to determine whether there are differences in the experience of absorption and flow, an adjusted statistical significance level was determined by taking the current statistical significant level ($p<0,05$) and dividing it with the amount of dependable variables. The adjusted significance level was therefore set at 0,03. None of the racial groups met this requirement with a statistical significance level lower than 0,03. No statistically significant differences ($p<0,05$) were found for gender, language groups, position, personnel area and education levels.

Based on the above results, hypothesis 4 was not accepted.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine to relationship between job characteristics, emotional labour and work related flow in an insurance industry call centre. More specifically, to determine on the one hand whether job resources and a lack of job demands can predict levels of work-related flow, and on the other hand whether job demands and a lack of job resources can predict emotional labour, in an insurance industry call centre. It was also investigated if differences were experienced in terms of emotional labour and work-related flow, based on demographic factors.

The factor structures of the JDRS, FEWS, and WOLF were determined with principal component factor analysis to determine the total factors of each instrument and followed up with principle axis factoring. A direct oblimen rotation was used to carry out factor analysis when there was more than one factor and when the factors were found to be correlated.

Analysis of the eigenvalues (larger than 1) and scree plot indicated that ten factors could be extracted in the JDRS, explaining 52,83% of the total variance. These factors were labelled Supervision, Pressure, Pay and Benefits, Task Freedom, Workload, Resource Availability, Job Security, Opportunity for Growth, Working Conditions and Support. A second-order factor analysis was performed on these ten factors, explaining 46,85% of the total variance. These two factors were labelled Job Resources and Job Demands. Job Resources consisted of Supervision, Opportunity for Growth, Task Freedom, Pay and Benefits, Resource Availability and Support). Job Demands consisted of Pressure, Working Conditions, Workload and Job Security (Swart, 2006).

Results of a simple principal component analysis conducted on the selected 21 items of the FEWS indicated that three factors could be extracted, explaining 42,06% of the total variance. These factors were labeled Positive Emotions, Negative Emotions and Emotional Dissonance. Three of the 21 variables did not load on any of the factors.

Swart (2006) conducted a simple principle component analysis on the 14 items of the WOLF. Analysis of the eigenvalues (larger than 1) and the scree plot indicated that two factors could be extracted, explaining 63,92% of the total variance. These factors were labelled Absorption and Flow. Le Roux (2005) tested a one-factor and a three-factor model of the WOLF with confirmatory factor analysis. In her study among employees in the mining industry she found that the fit-indices of a three-factor model showed acceptable fit. The three factors were labeled Work Enjoyment, Intrinsic Motivation and Absorption.

The reliability of the measuring instruments was examined by determining the Cronbach alpha coefficients. Cronbach alpha coefficients varying from 0,70 to 0,93 were obtained. These alpha coefficients compare reasonably well with the guideline of 0,70 (0,55 in basic research),

demonstrating that a large portion of the variance is explained by the dimensions (internal consistency of the dimensions) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). This is an indication that the measuring instruments were valid and reliable for the current research. Most of the scales of the measuring instruments have relatively normal distributions, with low skewness and kurtosis, except for the one factor of the JDRS which was positively skewed with high kurtosis. Le Roux (2005) found in her study that the one factor of the WOLF, Absorption had a low reliability with an alpha coefficient of 0,59. The alpha coefficients for work enjoyment and intrinsic motivation was 0,84 and 0,71 (Le Roux, 2005).

Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted to determine the relationship between job demands, job resources, burnout, work engagement and work-related flow. Results indicated that the availability of certain job characteristics (i.e. supervision, pay and benefits, opportunity for growth and task freedom) will result in higher levels of work-related flow experiences. Le Roux (2005) also found in her study in the mining industry that opportunities for growth had positive relations with work-related flow. Not all the factors of job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow correlated with one another. No statistical significant correlations were obtained between emotional labour and job characteristics. This is inconsistent with a study conducted by Zapf et al. (1999) where a negative correlation was found between task control and emotional dissonance.

Next a multiple regression analysis was conducted with work-related flow (i.e. absorption and flow) as dependent variable and job resources and job demands as independent variables. Results indicated that there are no significant predictors of absorption. This is inconsistent with a previous study conducted by Swart (2006), where opportunity for growth positively related to absorption. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Bakker (2004) found that work pressure as a job demand had a positive relationship with absorption. Such a correlation could not be proved in this study. Furthermore, results indicated that the only significant predictors of flow were opportunities for growth, pay and benefits, pressure and working conditions. Based on these results one could argue that the most important job characteristics that are likely to facilitate work-related flow in a call centre environment are opportunities for growth, pay and benefits, pressure and working conditions.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted with emotional labour (i.e. positive emotions, negative emotions and emotional dissonance) as dependent variable and job resources and job demands as independent variables. Results indicated that the only significant predictor of positive emotions was work load and the only significant predictors of negative emotions were work load, working conditions and the availability of resources. The management of workload, ensuring positive working conditions and the availability of resources (such as supervisor support) is therefore very important in ensuring the reduction of emotional labour in call centre environments. Furthermore, the only significant predictors of emotional dissonance were work load and supervision. These results are partly supported by a study conducted by Zapf et al. (2003) where it was concluded that employees in call centres experience significantly more emotional dissonance that employees in "non-service" environments, due to the requirement to display organisationally required emotions in unpleasant situations.

In investigating the differences in the experience of emotional labour based on various demographic aspects such as gender, racial and language groups, position, personnel area and education levels, no significant differences were found. No other studies investigating the differences in the experience of emotional labour based on demographic aspects were found.

Similarly, in investigating the differences in the experience of work-related flow based on various demographic aspects such as gender, racial and language groups, position, personnel area and education levels,. According to Carr (2004) work-based flow experiences are more common in cultures which the goals, norms, roles, rules and rituals closely match the skills of the population. However, in this study, no significant differences were found. No other studies investigating the experience of work –related flow based on demographic aspects were found.

Based on the results, hypotheses one, two and three were partially accepted, and hypothesis four was not accepted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Call centres are "tools" for organising communication with customers, with the help of telecommunication (Henn, Kruse & Strawe, 1996), and have the potential to completely replace face-to-face customer contacts (Hawcroft & Beckett, 1993). The high rate of turnover and absenteeism in many call centres, suggested that working in a call centre is a stressful experience (Holman, 2003) with little control of when and whom to speak to.

Call centre agents are also expected to always be friendly on the telephone – imposing emotional demands on the agent (Holman, 2003). The agent frequently encounters situations where anger is likely to be the dominant emotion (Deery, Iverson & Walsh, 2002) therefore it is important to diffuse the tension so that the situation can be resolved with minimum stress for both the agent and the customer. Employees must listen to try and understand the customer's point of view, even if the customer is being unreasonable (Crome, 1998).

The organisational requirements to be friendly, enthusiastic, polite, and helpful to customers, even if customers are rude, indicates further demands on call centre agents with respect to the volitional presentation of emotions in opposition to those being actually felt (Wegge, Van Dick, Fisher, Wecking & Moltzen, 2006). Still, despite the exposure to emotional labour, some employees experience working in a call centre as motivating and stimulating.

As a result, it is important to assist call centre agents in ensuring sustainability, through critically examining the job characteristics (i.e. job demands and job resources) in the environment and linking these job characteristics to emotional labour and positive constructs such as work-related flow. More specifically it is recommended that the industry understand the role of work load, working conditions, availability of resources and supervision in contributing to emotional labour. Zapf et al. (2003) indicated that employees in call centres experience significantly more emotional dissonance than employees in "non-service" environments, due to the requirement to display organisationally required emotions in unpleasant situations. As a result the industry needs to implement interventions to help call centre agents to deal with emotions experienced and with conflict handling.

It is further recommended that more research be done on the motivational power and positive impact of work-related flow in the industry and the relationship thereof with job demands and job resources. More research should also be done on the impact of job resources and job demands on other positive constructs and the contributing effect it has on emotional labour. Job resources appear to be significant predictors of work-related flow. It is therefore necessary to determine whether there are other job characteristics than those already identified that may enhance the experience of work-related flow.

The first limitation of this study was the use of a cross-sectional survey design. As a result no causal relationship inferences could be drawn. To deal with the limitation of the use of a cross-sectional design, prospective longitudinal and quasi-experimental research designs are needed to further validate the hypothesised structural relationships within the study. Another limitation was that the results were obtained purely by self-report measures. According to Schaufeli, Enzmann and Girault (1993), the exclusive use of self-report measures increase the likelihood that at least part of the shared variance between measures can be attributed to method variance.

The size of the sample in this research can be considered as a further limitation as it limited the generalisability of the findings. Due to the nature of the call centre environment (continuous flow of incoming calls and a strict focus on performance), it was difficult for the respondents to find time to complete the questionnaire. For this reason a limited amount of questionnaires were received. The small sample size can be a possible explanation for the absence of practically significant relationships between various constructs which proved to have practically significant relationships in some other studies. It is recommended that the study population be extended to include more employees in the insurance industry.

Similar studies need to be undertaken to include other and bigger samples of the insurance call centre industry. Further research is also needed in other positive constructs in the call centre environment to determine specifically the motivators of employees staying in the stressful and emotional call centre environment. Future longitudinal research should be conducted to pinpoint the causal nature of, and determine the relationship between, variables and to ascertain which

variables could enhance work-related flow and address emotional labour. Larger sample sizes will also allow for testing of construct equivalence and item bias in multicultural samples.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide conclusions regarding the results obtained in the empirical studies of the research article. Conclusions are drawn with regard to the research objectives. Furthermore, limitations that have been identified throughout the course of the study are discussed. Finally, recommendations for the organisation are made and research opportunities that emanate from this research are presented for future research.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The general objective of this research was to determine the relationship between job characteristics (i.e. job demands and job resources), emotional labour and work related flow in an insurance industry call centre. The following conclusions can be drawn:

The first objective of the study was to conceptualise job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow from the literature. *Job demands* were conceptualised as those physical, social or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort on the part of the employee and are associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003). It may include high work pressure, role overload, emotional demands and poor environmental conditions. Job demands represent characteristics of the job that potentially evoke strain in cases where they exceed the employee's adaptive capability (Bakker et al., 2003). *Job resources* were conceptualised as those physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job that either/or: (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (2) are functional in achieving work goals; (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). Resources may be located at the level of the organisation (e.g. salary, career opportunities, job security), interpersonal and social relations (e.g. supervisor and co-worker support, team climate), the organisation of work (e.g. role clarity, participation in decision

making), and the task level (e.g. performance feedback, skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy).

Emotional labour was conceptualised as the effort, planning, and control needed to express organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Employees are required to display organisationally desired emotions, even in situations where the emotion is not actually felt (Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1998), defined *work related flow* as experiences where we become engaged in controllable but challenging tasks or activities that require skill and which are intrinsically motivating. According to Carr (2004) our sense of self disappears when involved in these tasks and paradoxically the sense of self emerges as strengthened after the task is completed. In addition, time perception is altered during flow experiences and hours can pass in what seem to be minutes and minutes can seem like hours. Research by Massimini and Carli (1988) revealed that in order to experience flow, there must be a unity between challenge and skill and this needs to be above a critical threshold level. To remain in flow, one must increase the complexity of the activity by developing both new challenges and skills (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1998). At work, it is desirable to have a match between the individuals growing capabilities and increasing job responsibilities. When this is achieved, the individual is more likely to remain in flow in the longer term (Lu, 1999). Larson (1998) argued that it is the ability to structure experience to provide a balance between challenge and skill at a higher level of complexity that leads towards personal growth and discovery. This suggests that flow is an optimal experience that facilitates the fulfilment of individual potential (Percival, Crous & Schepers, 2003).

The second objective of this study was to determine the relationship between job characteristics (job demands and job resources), emotional labour and work-related flow according to the literature.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model is a model developed by Demerouti et al. (2000) that specifies how health impairment and motivation or involvement in any organisation may be

produced by job demands and job resources. According to the JD-R model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2000) the two sets of working conditions (job demands and job resources) may each evoke a different process. First, badly designed jobs or high job demands (e.g. work overload, emotional demands) may exhaust employees' mental and physical resources and may therefore lead to the depletion of energy (i.e. a state of exhaustion) and to health problems. The presence of adequate job resources reduces job demands, fosters goal accomplishment and stimulates personal growth and development. In turn, this may lead to a stronger involvement in terms of organisational commitment and dedication to one's work, and thus to a lower intention to leave the organisation. Job demands and job resources are negatively related, since job demands such as high work pressure and emotionally demanding interactions with clients may preclude the mobilisation of job resources. In the same manner high job resources may reduce job demands (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer & Schaufeli, 2003).

Emotional dissonance, which is an aspect of emotional labour, occurs when an employee is required to express emotions which are not genuinely felt in a particular situation. In a study conducted by Zapf, Vogt, Seifert, Mertini and Isic (1999) it was found that a negative correlation exists between task control (as a job characteristic) and emotional dissonance.

Bakker (2004) found that when individuals are able to balance their job demands and job resources, they will be more open to positive experiences (such as work-related flow) in the work situation, which may result in better performance by that individual.

The third objective of this study was to determine the construct validity and internal consistency of the measuring instruments of job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow. The factor structures of the measuring instruments were determined via principle axis factoring. A direct oblimen rotation was used when there was more than one factor and when the factors were found to be correlated. Ten factors could be extracted on the JDRS, explaining 52,83% of the total variance. These factors were labelled Supervision, Pressure, Pay and Benefits, Task Freedom, Workload, Resource Availability, Job Security, Opportunity for Growth, Working Conditions and Support. A second order factor analysis was performed on the ten factors of the JDRS. Two factors were extracted, explaining 46,85% of the total variance. These factors were

labelled Job Resources (consisting of Supervision, Opportunity for Growth, Task Freedom, Pay and Benefits, Resource Availability, and Support) and Job Demands (consisting of Pressure, Working Conditions, Workload and Job Security). Three factors could be extracted on the FEWS, explaining 42,06% of the total variance. These factors were labelled Positive Emotions, Negative Emotions and Emotional Dissonance. Two factors could be extracted on the WOLF, explaining 63,92% of the total variance. These factors were labeled Absorption and Flow (consisting of Work Enjoyment and Intrinsic Work Motivation).

Acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients varying from 0,70 to 0,93 were obtained, except for Workload (0,52). These alpha coefficients compared reasonably well with the guideline of 0,70 (0,55 in basic research), demonstrating that a large portion of the variance was explained by the dimensions (internal consistency of the dimensions) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Most of the scales of the measuring instruments had relatively normal distributions.

The fourth objective of this study was to determine the relationship between job characteristics, emotional labour and work-related flow for employees in an insurance industry call centre. Pearson product-moment correlation showed that statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, large effect) exist between absorption and flow and statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, medium effect) between absorption, supervision, pay and benefits, opportunity for growth, and task freedom. There were statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, large effect) between flow, pay and benefits, and opportunity for growth and statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, medium effect) between flow, supervision and task freedom. Resource availability had a statistically significant positive correlation (practically significant, medium effect) with supervision. Pressure had a significantly positive correlation (practically significant, medium effect) with working conditions. Supervision had a statistically significant positive correlation (practically significant, large effect) with opportunity for growth and a statistically significant negative correlation (practically significant, large effect) with task freedom. Supervision had statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, medium effect) with pay and benefits and support. Pay and benefits had statistically significant positive correlations (practically significant, medium effect) with opportunity for growth and task freedom.

Opportunity for growth had a statistically significant positive correlation (practically significant, large effect) with task freedom. Positive emotions had a statistically significant positive correlation (practically significant, medium effect) with emotional dissonance.

The fifth objective of this study was to determine whether job demands and job resources can predict work-related flow in an Insurance industry call centre. The results of a multiple regression analysis with work-related flow (i.e. absorption and flow) as dependent variable and job resources and job demands as independent variables showed that 23% of the variance explained in absorption were predicted by job resources ($F = 7{,}45$, $p<0{,}05$). The only significant predictor of absorption was pay and benefits. When job demands were added into the multiple regression analysis the statistical significance of R^2 increased. The results of the multiple regression analysis further showed that 26% of the variance explained in absorption were predicted by job resources and job demands ($F = 4{,}98$, $p<0{,}05$). There were however no significant predictors of absorption. It also showed that 39% of the variance explained in flow was predicted by job resources ($F = 15{,}76$, $p<0{,}05$). The only significant predictors of flow were opportunities for growth and pay and benefits. When job demands were added into the multiple regression analysis the statistical significance of R^2 increased. The results also showed that 44% of the variance explained in flow was predicted by job resources and job demands ($F = 11{,}29$, $p<0{,}05$). The only significant predictors of flow were opportunities for growth, pay and benefits, pressure and working conditions.

The sixth objective of this study was to determine whether job demands and the lack of job resources can predict emotional labour in and Insurance industry call centre. A multiple regression analysis with emotional labour (i.e. positive emotions, negative emotions and emotional dissonance) as dependent variable and job demands and job resources as independent variables were conducted. Results showed that 7% of the variance explained in positive emotions were predicted by job demands ($F = 7{,}63$, $p<0{,}05$). The only significant predictor of positive emotions was work load. When job resources were added into the multiple regression analysis the value of R^2 increased, however the variance explained in positive emotions were not statistical significant. It also showed that 11% of the variance explained in negative emotions were predicted by job demands ($F = 4{,}58$, $p<0{,}05$). The only significant predictors of negative

emotions were pressure, work load and working conditions. It further indicates that 18% of the variance explained in negative emotions were predicted by job demands and job resources (F = 3,18, p<0,05). The only significant predictors of negative emotions were work load, working conditions and the availability of resources. The results further showed that 5% of the variance in emotional dissonance were predicted by job demands but this prediction is not statistical significant. When job resources were added into the multiple regression analysis the value of R^2 increased. 18% of the variance in emotional dissonance were predicted by job demands and job resources (F = 3,12, p<0,05). The only significant predictors of emotional dissonance were work load, and supervision.

The seventh objective of this study was to determine, based on demographic factors, the differences experienced in terms of emotional labour and work-related flow in an Insurance industry call centre. MANOVA analysis was conducted to determine differences between demographic groups (such as gender, racial and language groups, position, personnel area and education levels) in the experience of emotional labour. Results were first analysed for statistical significance using Wilk's Lambda statistics. ANOVA was used to determine specific difference whenever statistical differences were found. In analysis of Wilk's Lambda values, statistically significant differences (p<0,05) regarding positive and negative emotions and emotional dissonance could be found in terms of position. In order to determine whether there were differences in the experience of positive and negative emotions and emotional dissonance, an adjusted statistical significance level were determined by taking the current statistical significant level (p<0,05) and dividing it with the amount of dependable variables. The adjusted significance level was therefore set at 0,02. None of the positions met this requirement with a significance lower than 0,02. No statistically significant differences (p<0,05) were found for gender, racial groups, language groups, personnel area and education levels.

MANOVA analysis was also conducted to determine differences between demographic groups (such as gender, racial and language groups, position, personnel area and education levels) in the experience of work-related flow. Results were first analysed for statistical significance using Wilk's Lambda statistics. ANOVA was used to determine specific difference whenever statistical differences were found. In analysis of Wilk's Lambda values, statistically significant

differences (p<0,05) regarding absorption and flow could be found in terms of racial groups. In order to determine whether there are differences in the experience of absorption and flow, an adjusted statistical significance level was determined by taking the current statistical significant level (p<0,05) and dividing it with the amount of dependable variables. The adjusted significance level was therefore set at 0,03. None of the racial groups met this requirement with a statistical significance level lower than 0,03. No statistically significant differences (p<0,05) were found for gender, language groups, position, personnel area and education levels.

3.2 LIMITATIONS

The first limitation of this study was the use of a cross-sectional survey design. To deal with the limitation of the use of a cross-sectional design, prospective longitudinal and quasi-experimental research designs are needed to further validate the hypothesised causal relationships within the study.

The second limitation was the size of the sample. The response of the call centre agents was very poor due to the hectic, demanding and competitive nature of their working environment. It was felt that their work performance suffers when they are absent from their work stations, seeing that they work on commission basis. Only 176 of the 370 surveys were retrieved.

The results were obtained solely by self-report measures. This may lead to a problem known as "method variance" or "nuisance". However, several authors argue that this phenomenon is not a major threat if interactions are found (Dollard & Winefield, 1998). Another limitation was that the questionnaire booklets were given to the managers of the various call centres who then had to give the instructions to the call centre agents that participated. The participants completed the questionnaire booklets either at home or at work. Some individuals working in the same area could have discussed the answers, and this could have influenced their responses.

The questionnaire was available only in English. The possibility exists that respondents' level of English language skills (with English as a second, third or even fourth language) could have influenced the results. Another limitation was that only selected job demands and job resources

were included in this study. It is possible that certain information was not included in the compilation of the instrument. It may therefore be necessary to investigate the factor structure of the JDRS in other organisations in the insurance industry.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations pertaining to the specific organisation used in this study, as well as recommendations for future research, are made in this section.

3.3.1 Recommendations to the organisation

Call centres are "tools" for organising communication with customers, with the help of telecommunication (Henn, Kruse & Strawe, 1996), and have the potential to completely replace face-to-face customer contacts (Hawcroft & Beckett, 1993). The high rate of turnover and absenteeism in many call centres, suggested that working in a call centre is a stressful experience (Holman, 2003) with little control of when and whom to speak to.

Call centre agents are also expected to always be friendly on the telephone – imposing emotional demands on the agent (Holman, 2003). Being frequently encountering situations where anger is likely to be the dominant emotion (Deery, Iverson & Walsh, 2002), it is important to diffuse the tension so that the situation can be resolved with minimum stress for both the agent and the customer. Employees must listen to try and understand the customer's point of view, even if the customer is being unreasonable (Crome, 1998).

The organisational requirements to be friendly, enthusiastic, polite, and helpful to customers, even if customers are rude, indicates further demands on call centre agents with respect to the volitional presentation of emotions in opposition to those being actually felt (Wegge, Van Dick, Fisher, Wecking & Moltzen, 2006). Still, despite the exposure to emotional labour, some employees experience working in a call centre as motivating and stimulating.

As a result, it is important to assist call centre agents in ensuring sustainability, through critically examining the job characteristics (i.e. job demands and job resources) in the environment and linking these job characteristics to emotional labour and positive constructs such as work-related flow. More specifically it is recommended that the industry understand the role of work load, working conditions, availability of resources and supervision in contributing to emotional labour. Zapf, Isic, Bechtold and Blau, (2003) indicated that employees in call centres experience significantly more emotional dissonance than employees in "non-service" environments, due to the requirement to display organisationally required emotions in unpleasant situations. As a result the industry needs to implement interventions to help call centre agents to deal with emotions experienced and with conflict handling.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

It is recommended that more research be done on the motivational power and positive impact of work-related flow in the industry and the relationship thereof with job demands and job resources. More research should also be done on the impact of job resources and job demands on other positive constructs and the contributing effect it has on emotional labour. Job resources appear to be significant predictors of work-related flow. It is therefore necessary to determine whether there are job characteristics other than those already identified that may enhance the experience of work-related flow.

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