

**THE EFFECT OF STRESS, BURNOUT AND EMOTIONAL LABOUR ON
INTENTION TO LEAVE AMONGST CALL CENTRE EMPLOYEES**

by

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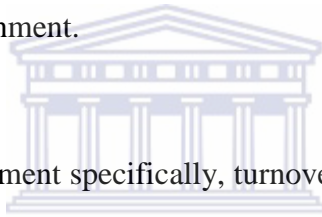
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ABSTRACT

The increasing demand for client-centred services in a highly competitive business environment has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of call centres world wide (Knight 2004 cited in Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006; Nel & De Villiers 2004 cited in Carrim et al., 2006; Williams, 2000 cited in Carrim et al., 2006). According to Holdsworth and Cartwright (2003); Malhotra and Mukherjee (2004); Singh and Goolsby (1994), the work of a customer service representative is seen as one of the ten most stressful jobs in the present-day world economy. Customer service representatives are highly susceptible to elevated levels of stress and burnout, more so than in any other work environment.



Within the call centre environment specifically, turnover has been identified as one of the most pressing problems in terms of scope (levels or percentages of turnover), cost and productivity (O'Herron, 2003 cited in Spies, 2006). Factors that lead to unhappiness in call centres are, inter alia, the monotony and repetitiveness of the job content. This situation is aggravated by lack of opportunities for promotion and by stress (Worldroom Digest, 2004 cited in Carrim et al., 2006). In addition, Hochschild (1983) posits that organisations in the service industry do not hesitate to “commercialize” employees’ emotions as a means to attract and retain customers. Research suggests that service providers are under implicit and explicit pressure to regulate their emotions as a tool to lure customers into patronizing the organisation.

In recent studies, several key factors were identified that are commonly associated with turnover intention among customer service representatives, namely, work

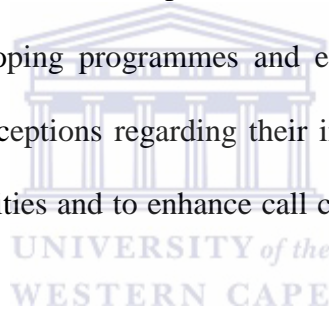
overload, monitoring and surveillance of employees, competing management goals, upward career movement, lack of skill variety, and emotional labour (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Deery et al., 2002; Deery & Kinnie, 2004; Holman, 2004; Singh, 2000; Zapf, Isic, Bechtoldt & Blau, 2003). If not dealt with appropriately, stress, burnout and emotional labour can increase the turnover rate, which accordingly can be damaging to the organisation.

The current research was conducted at an outbound call centre in a retail organisation in the Western Cape. The sample comprised of a hundred and sixty three call centre employees who are employed in the collections/outbound department. Convenience sampling was utilised. A self-developed Biographical Questionnaire, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), the Emotional Labour Scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003), the Experience of Work and Life Circumstances Questionnaire (Van Zyl & Van der walt, 1994), and the Turnover Intentions Questionnaire (Roodt, 2004) were used to collect the data. The data was analysed using SPSS and the results were interpreted by means of descriptive and inferential statistics (the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, T-Test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multiple Regression Analysis.

The results indicate that there is a moderate relationship between stress and intention to leave the organisation amongst the sample of employees. There was also a significant relationship between burnout and intention to leave the organisation. Moreover, there was a significant relationship between emotional labour and intention to leave the organisation.

Further findings of the current study are: there are significant differences in stress based on employees' gender and tenure, a significant difference in burnout with regards to gender and employment type, and significant differences between emotional labour based on gender and tenure. However, no significant difference was found between burnout and tenure, nor was there a significant difference between emotional labour and employment type.

Recommendations are made to alleviate the effects of stress on call centre employees which in turn, will minimise the effects of burnout and emotional labour. Recommendations included the development of wellness programmes, stress management programmes, coping programmes and effective communications as a mean to shape employee perceptions regarding their interpretation of organisational demands, threats or opportunities and to enhance call centre employees' performance within their work.



KEYWORDS

Stress, Burnout, Emotional labour, Emotional regulation, Sources of stress, Coping strategies, Models of burnout, Call centre, Call centre employees, Intention to leave.

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis “The effect of Stress, Burnout and Emotional Labour on Intention to leave amongst call centre employees” is my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university. All the resources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.



Aaishah Sadien

DEDICATION

To my parents Abdurahmaan and Soumaya Sadien, I would like to sincerely thank my parents who are my strength, inspiration and my life. Their love and encouragement gave me the ability to get this far. I dedicate this research to the both of them, as without their continual support and love; this research would not have been possible. I love Mommy and Abatie lots!

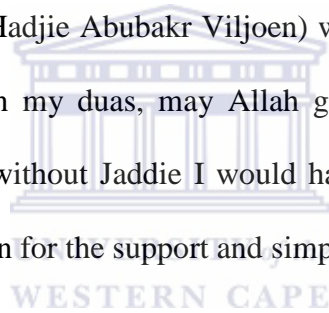


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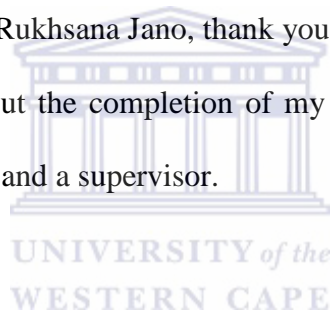
To my siblings, Naeemah, Nurainee and Mohamed Hussein, shukran for your support and constant encouragements, you mean the world to me!

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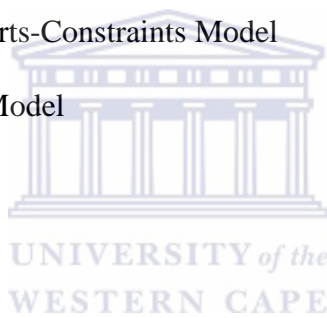
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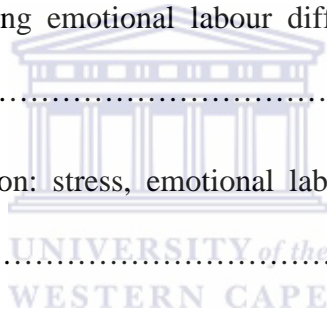
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The increasing demand for client-centred services in a highly competitive business environment has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of call centres world wide (Knight 2004 cited in Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006; Nel & De Villiers 2004 cited in Carrim et al., 2006; Williams 2000 cited in Carrim et al., 2006). The call centre industry in South Africa has grown tremendously experiencing growth rates of up to thirty-five percent (35%) since 1996. Therefore since the 1990s, call centres have become the latest and clearest expression of efforts aimed at rationalising the provision of service through the use of communication and information technologies (Russel, 2004 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006). This is commonly regarded as a direct result of organisations' attempts to provide customer service at a significantly lower cost (Paulet, 2004 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006) in response to information and communication technology developments, business outsourcing practices, and internal reorganisation of enterprises (Burgess & Connell, 2004 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006).

The term “call centre” refers to the environment within an organisation where the call centre employee, via the medium of the telephone, provides client support and/or a sales channel through which new business is generated and present business is retained (Nel & De Villiers 2004 cited in Carrim et al., 2006; Sprigg, Smith & Jackson 2003 cited in Carrim et al., 2006). They usually have a relatively high number of contingent workers,

with flexible employment contracts. This flexibility is reflected in different types of contracts (fixed or temporary), in differences in working hours (part-time/full-time), and in flexibility of working hours (for example, a range between minimum and maximum numbers of working hours). The use of these atypical contracts is related to the need for flexibility in the deployment of staff because of (sometimes unpredictable) peaks in call volumes (Kalleberg, 2000 cited in Schalk & Rijckevorsel, 2007).

Call centres are generally regarded as a high-stress environment that makes unique demands on employees (Townsend 2005 cited in Carrim et al., 2006). In order to carry out their duties successfully, call centre employees require specific attributes, such as the ability to maintain good customer relations and deal with constant technological change. The ability to adapt to fast-changing circumstances, to anticipate, and to deal with complaints is therefore essential for success in this environment (Nel & De Villiers 2004 cited in Carrim et al., 2006). In addition, call centre employees must be able to remain calm and controlled even when facing abuse from customers in order to uphold the company's standard of quality service (Lewig & Dollard, 2003 cited in Carrim et al., 2006).

In general, call centres are not seen as particularly pleasant workplaces. They have been given many different names such as “electronic sweatshops”, “dark satanic mills” and “assembly lines in the head” (Deery & Kinnie, 2004 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009; Taylor & Bain, 1999 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009, p. 1). Concern has been expressed about the possible negative effects of call centre work on the psychological

well-being of employees. Hochschild (1979 cited in Deery, Iverson & Walsh, 2002, 1983 cited in Deery et al., 2002) has claimed that job-related burnout is one of the most likely outcomes of the performance of emotional labour. She believe that staff who were employed in jobs with sustained customer contact and few opportunities to vary the nature of their displayed feelings, risked high levels of stress. Morris and Feldman (1997 cited in Deery et al., 2002) also posit that frequent interpersonal interactions with clients of an emotionally intense nature could be expected to lead to emotional exhaustion (Deery et al., 2002).

In an overview of employee stress and well-being in call centres, Holman (2003) identified the following aspects as having strong positive effects on employee well-being: high control over work methods and procedures, and what is said to the customer; a sufficient degree of variety; a performance management system that is both aimed at the development of individuals and not perceived as being too rigid or severe; a supportive team leader, and supportive HR practices. If these aspects are not attended to, it can result in a variety of negative consequences, including increased absence and turnover rates; increased staffing, recruitment and training costs; decreased quality of customer service; increased errors; lower first-time call resolutions and more “unnecessary calls” (Holman, 2003 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006).

Organisations have benefited from call centres because it has enabled them to reduce the costs of existing functions, and to extend improved customer service facilities. However, Holman (2003 cited in Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003) has outlined that the

benefits for the call centre employees are less clear. He has argued where some employees enjoy call centre work, for many it is experienced as being demanding and stressful (cited in Bakker et al., 2003).

Korczynski (2002 cited in Deery & Kinnie, 2002) puts forth that call centre work is infused with two logics: a need to be cost-efficient and a desire to be customer-orientated. He purports that these twin objectives are fundamentally contradictory. Organisations seek to reduce costs per customer transaction by increasing the speed with which calls are processed. These tensions and contradictions are evident in the marketplace. Customers are seeking to obtain services that are adapted to their needs and requirements, yet at the same time it should be efficient and inexpensive.

Furthermore, organisations put the burden of high performance and smooth functioning on young people, who often possess rather high education but are offered lower positions and salaries. Thus, the resulting stress responses, high absenteeism, high turnover, and difficulties in personnel recruitment, management and retention are hardly surprising outcomes according to Bagnara et al. (2000 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006).

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Attracting and retaining a talented workforce is a top priority for call centres. Call centre representatives are often the only ‘face’ that customers have an opportunity to interact with, and they represent the front line of customer service. Call centre representatives are in a position to keep current business, promote new business, and develop solid customer

relationships for the future. Unfortunately, call centre turnover is painfully expensive for organisations, and call centre operations can be disrupted by high turnover rates often exceeding 50 percent annually (Mobbs, 2002).

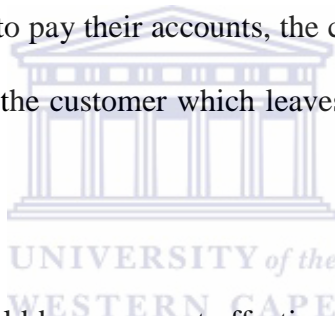
There is no panacea for high call centre turnover in a contact centre, but research highlights some important factors that impact employee turnover. A field study conducted in a call centre that markets credit cards underscores the need for organisational newcomers to have appropriate expectations when entering a new position (Carrim et al., 2006). Literature suggests that call centre managers are also confronted with the problem of finding ways to deal with the high percentage of staff absenteeism and turnover in the call centre environment as a result of the workload and stress experienced by call centre employees (Bagnara 2000 cited in Carrim et al., 2006; Townsend 2005 cited in Carrim et al., 2006). Factors that lead to unhappiness in call centres are the monotony and repetitiveness of the job content. This situation is further aggravated by lack of opportunities for promotion and by stress (Worldroom Digest 2004 cited in Carrim et al., 2006). Furthermore, according to Erickson and Wharton (1997 cited in Deery, Iverson & Walsh, 2002) employees are expected to ‘appear happy, nice and glad to serve the customer’ in spite of any private misgivings or any different feelings they may have.

This study was conducted in the outbound/collections department as its turnover rate is higher than the organisation’s inbound/customer services department. According to the records of this department the attrition rate between August 2007 to July 2008 indicated

that there were 280 terminations amongst the total of 546.67 call centre employees. In addition, there were a further 134 terminations of a total of 537 call centre employees between the periods of August 2008 to July 2009.

The higher turnover rate was a result of the following:

- a) The collections department is a very target driven environment,
- b) lots of deadlines have to be met,
- c) call centre employees tasks and duties are strictly monitored,
- d) employee have to deal with difficult and rude customers on a day-to-day basis,
- e) when customers refuse to pay their accounts, the call centre employee is forced to be harsh and firm with the customer which leaves the employee stressed out and emotionally exhausted.



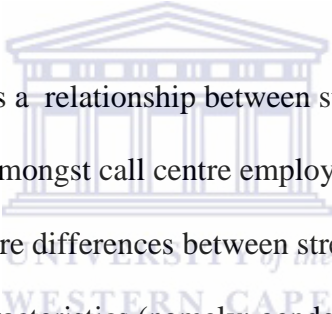
Ultimately, the call centre should be more cost effective however, lower employee well-being can in reality increase the total costs. Workman and Bommer (2004 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006) support this notion - findings from their research showed that negative attitudes due to damaging experiences in the call centre environment resulted in reduced productivity, poor customer service, higher turnover and absenteeism and ultimately, an adverse financial impact (cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006).

Therefore the challenge for call centre management is to attempt to remove the factors that are causing stress and it has to be managed before it manifests into burnout and emotional labour. Call centre management must therefore equip the employees with the

necessary tools and skills to handle/control stressful situations that they are faced with in the call centre environment on a daily basis. If these issues are not attended to, it can result in a variety of negative consequences, including increased absence and turnover rates; increased staffing, recruitment and training costs; decreased quality of customer service; increased errors; lower first-time call resolutions and more “unnecessary calls” (Holman, 2003 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006).

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

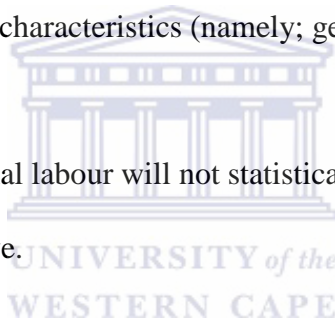
The purpose of the study is specifically:

- 
1. To determine whether there is a relationship between stress, burnout and emotional labour on intention to leave amongst call centre employees.
 2. To determine whether there are differences between stress and burnout based on employees' biographical characteristics (namely; gender, tenure and employment type).
 3. To determine whether there are differences between emotional labour based on employees' biographical characteristics (namely; gender, tenure and employment type).
 4. To determine whether Stress, burnout and emotional labour will not significantly explain the variance in intention to leave.

1.4 HYPOTHESES

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

- (1) There is a statistically significant relationship between stress, burnout and emotional labour amongst call centre employees and their intention to leave.
- (2) There are statistically significant differences in stress and burnout between call centre employees based on their biographical characteristics (namely; gender, tenure and employment type).
- (3) There are significant differences in emotional labour between call centre employees based on their biographical characteristics (namely; gender, tenure and employment type).
- (4) Stress, burnout and emotional labour will not statistically significantly explain the variance in intention to leave.



1.5 DEFINITIONS OF IMPORTANT CONSTRUCTS

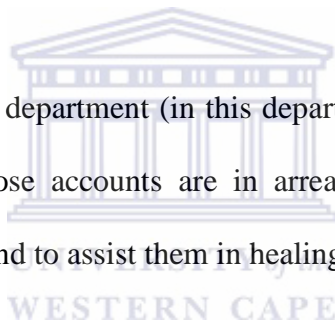
1.5.1 Definition of a call centre

A call centre can be defined as 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 use of display screen equipment and the instant access to, and inputting of, information (Holman, 2003 cited in Bakker et al., 2003). It is therefore a business that integrates advanced technology with an effectively designed business process and human resources (Uys, 2006).

There are many different types of call centres with the differentiating factors being whether calls are inbound or outbound (the degree of the product complexity and variability, and the depth of knowledge required to deal with the service interaction (Bain & Taylor cited in Callaghan & Thompson, 2000).

Different departments within the call centre exist, namely:

- Inbound – customer services department (in this department customers call the call centre employees with queries or complaints about the products or services) and new accounts (in this department customers call the call centre employees to open new accounts).
- Outbound – collections department (in this department the call centre employees call the customers whose accounts are in arrears to remind them about their outstanding payments and to assist them in healing their accounts).



Different shifts exist within the departments of the call centre, namely:

- Day shift – call centre employees work from 08:00 am till 16:00 pm.
- Night shift – call centre employees work from 16:00 am till 21:00 pm.

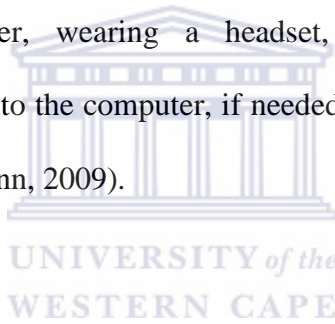
Different employment types exist within the departments of the call centre, namely:

- PPT – Permanent part-timer (this is a permanent position without receiving incentives/commission).
- FPT – Flexible part-timer (this is a 6month contract position).

- P5 – Permanent day shift employee, receiving all benefits of a permanent employee with incentives/commission.
- P6 - Permanent night shift employee, receiving all benefits of a permanent employee with incentives/commission.

1.5.2 Definition of a call centre employee/call centre representative

Call centre employees/call centre representative are the front-line employees whose primary task is to interact with customers by means of the the name call centre. Call centre employees / call centre representative is described as someone sitting at the table in front of his/her computer, wearing a headset, talking to customers while simultaneously entering data into the computer, if needed (Zapft, Isic, Bechtoldt & Blau, 2003 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009).



1.5.3 Definition of stress

Stress occurs when the perceived pressure exceeds one's perceived ability to cope (Palmer et al 2003 cited in Lawless & Allan, 2004). Stress is thus always perceived; a situation is only stressful for a given individual, not for all individuals (Lawless & Allan, 2004). Work stress is the perceived failure to cope with job demands: a perception that is often expressed as anxiety or tension. Stressors are therefore environmental characteristics that may stimulate feeling of stress (Johns, 1994).

1.5.3 Definition of burnout

Burnout can be seen as a chronic affective response syndrome, a type of stress that develops in response to stressful working conditions. When people experience burnout they usually experience a gradual sense of loss that develops over an extended period of time (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993).

1.5.4 Definition of emotional labour

Emotional labour may involve enhancing, faking, or suppressing emotions to modify the emotional expression. Generally, emotions are managed in response to the *display rules* for the organisation or job (Ekman & Friesen, 1975 cited in Grandey, 2000; Goffman, 1959 cited in Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983 cited in Grandey, 2000). According to Morris and Feldman (1996 cited in Rupp & Spencer, 2006) emotional labour (that is, the effort, planning, and control required to manage one's emotions to achieve an organisational objective is governed in part by surface acting, or attempts to modify outward expressions even though inward feelings might be in disagreement with them (Grandey, 2003).

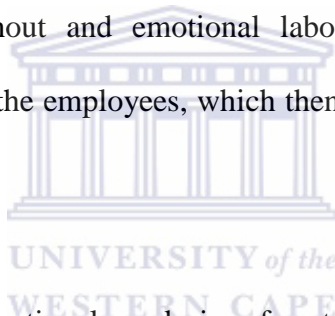
1.5.5 Definition of intentions to leave

Meertz and Campion (2001) proposed an objective definition of voluntary turnover as those instances where management agrees that, at the time of termination, the employee still had the opportunity to continue employment at the particular company if they so desired.

In previous studies, however, intent to stay or leave one's position has been found to be a good proxy indicator for actual turnover (Bluedorn, 1982 cited in Hohnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Lee & Mowday, 1987 cited in Hohnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Steers & Mowday, 1981 cited in Hohnsrud & Rosser, 2002).

1.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The study has been contextualised with specific reference being made to the current dilemma faced within a call centre environment. For individuals, a call centre environment is one of the most stressful environments to work and survive in. Stress inevitably develops into burnout and emotional labour which in turn, affects the performance and happiness of the employees, which then increases the staff absenteeism and turnover rate.



The chapter also outlined the rationale and aims for study, wherefrom the hypotheses were formulated. The chapter concludes with defining the important constructs being investigated in the study.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the nature of the call centre environment. The concepts of stress, burnout and emotional labour are introduced and comprehensively discussed; as well as reference is made to research findings of studies conducted. It also individually explores the link between stress, burnout and emotional labour on intention to leave within the call centre environment.

Chapter 3 provides a perspective on the research design used to investigate the research problem with specific reference to the procedure and instruments (as well as their psychometric properties) used to gather the data. The chapter concludes with the statistical techniques employed to test the hypotheses.

Chapter 4 analyses and interprets the results gathered from the research study.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the results and makes reference to current findings. The chapter concludes by elaborating on the limitations of the study and provides recommendations for future research.

Chapter two proceeds with a review of the relevant literature pertaining to the constructs being investigated.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the theoretical premise for the study. Firstly, an overview understanding the functioning of a call centre is presented thereof. Thereafter each variable being investigated in the current study (namely, stress, burnout, emotional labour and intention to leave) is explored in detail.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A worldwide economic shift from the traditional industrial economy to the service economy has taken place with the boom in the employment of service workers (McCammon & Griffin, 2000 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009). One popular method that companies use for the delivery of service, specifically companies within the financial sector, travel industry and the telecommunications industry involves the use of call centres. Call centres were mostly created as an alternative, more cost-effective service model to replace the high cost of branch infrastructure where face-to-face client interaction was the order of the day (Taylor & Bain, 1999 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009).

With the growth of the service economy and with call centres becoming one of the preferred ways of delivering service, the call centre industry experienced unprecedented growth, becoming one of the fastest growing employment sectors in the world. It is estimated that 2.3% of the United Kingdom population is working in call centres and that

two-thirds of all customer interaction takes place through call centres. The same trends can be seen in the United States of America and Europe (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009; Taylor & Bain, 1999 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009). Similar trends can also be observed in South Africa (Briggs, 1998 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009).

Under-researched until the late 1990s, call centres have now received considerable academic attention. An apparent initial reluctance to undertake research activity may have been encouraged by a relatively common belief that the call centre would prove to be an ephemeral or marginal phenomenon, a transient form of work organisation. However, the spectacular and sustained growth of call centres extend far beyond their initial bases in the financial services and telecommunications sectors, has confounded early scepticism. The competitive advantage gained through the integration of telephone and VDU technologies, providing direct telephone based customer service and selling, provoked widespread emulation. Given the UK government's modernising agenda which aims to ensure that by 2002 25 per cent of its services are accessible electronically, the wholesale adoption of call centres in the public sector seems certain (Taylor, Mulvey, Hyman & Bain, 2000).

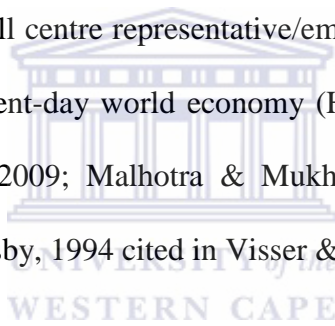
A similar pattern of call centre growth is seen in South Africa. It is estimated that there are approximately 250 call centres in this country, with an estimated growth of 20% per year. In South Africa, as in the rest of the world, call centres are fast replacing the traditional service channel of branch infrastructures in the financial services sector, which

accounts for approximately 35% of all call centres in South Africa (Briggs, 1998 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009).

During the last 20 years the growing globalization of the economy, along with the development of new technologies, has inundated organisations with a mass of new products and production processes. A range of business and consumer requirements are changing. Organisations' response to customer expectations and demands for a 24-hour electronic society has seen a phenomenal growth in service-based call centres (Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2002).

What might have seemed to have been an exaggerated projection that 2.3% of the working population would be employed in call centres by 2002 (Datamonitor, 1998 cited in Taylor, Mulvey, Hyman & Bain, 2000), now seems certain to be confirmed, if not exceeded. The available evidence also suggests that predictions in the rise of the internet and the emergence of e-commerce would lead to the displacement of the call centre are mistaken. The emerging model is of customer contact centres, 'one stop shops', in which phone-based operations are integrated with the internet, email and fax (electronic or conventional) in the management of the customer relationship. In the medium term, continued call centre growth seems assured, although predictions based on current trends take no account of the impact of a possible economic recession on the service sector in general, and on call centre employment levels in particular (Taylor, Mulvey, Hyman & Bain, 2000).

In the service economy, specifically within call centres, a special type of service employee needs to be mentioned. They are referred to as customer service representatives (CSR) (Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2003 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009) for the purpose of this study they are referred to as call centre employees. Call centre employees occupy boundary-spanning roles in representing the organisation to the customer and mostly perform emotional labour, which is a form of emotional regulation, where employees are expected to display certain emotions as part of their job, and to promote organisational goals (Grandey, 2000 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009). They are highly susceptible to elevated levels of stress and burnout, more so than in any other work environment. The work of a call centre representative/employee is seen as one of the ten most stressful jobs in the present-day world economy (Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2003 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009; Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009; Singh & Goolsby, 1994 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009).

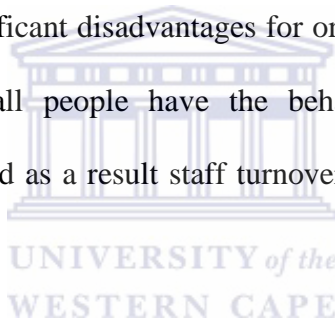


In service industries such as hotels, insurance, banking, retail, and so forth, companies are increasingly paying more attention to customer-contact employees to achieve the desired profit and market-share goals. Companies are now adopting a people-oriented approach as compared to a profit-oriented approach. Successful service managers recognise the importance of crucial factors that drive profitability in this new service paradigm: investment in people, technology that supports frontline workers, revamped recruiting and training practices, and compensation linked to performance for employees at every level (Heskett et al., 1994 cited in Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004).

Service organisations are encouraged by the literature (Gronroos, 1996 cited in Constani & Gibbs, 2004, 1997 cited in Constani & Gibbs, 2004, 2000 cited in Constani & Gibbs, 2004; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000 cited in Constani & Gibbs, 2004) to consider the manner in which employees perform at the customer/provider interface, as a means to gain competitive advantage. The employee's behaviour requires "emotional labour" (Hochschild, 1983 cited in Constani & Gibbs, 2004) where the front-line employee, not the management, has to either conceal or manage actual feelings for the benefit of a successful service delivery. The implication is not necessarily of equality or mutual benefit but of satisfaction for the customer and profit for the management. Performing emotional labour is required both for a successful delivery of service to customers, but also as a strategy for coping with the need to conceal real feelings. The demands made by customers and the management means tensions occur and exploitation potential appears in the unequal distribution of power in the emotional labour triangle. Tensions and weaknesses exist in the provision of equity in the support, expectation and investment issues faced by the front-line employee, manager and customer (Constani & Gibbs, 2004).

Call centres are continually introducing improved infrastructures and more advanced technology as a reaction to the need for bigger, better, faster and even more cost-effective communication. This has manifested into work environments where call length is measured in seconds, and overt and covert electronic monitoring systems ensure employee compliance to precise operating procedures (Uys, 2006).

It is a disciplined environment where precision control can be put in place and perfectionism can easily demand a perfect call from the call centre employee for every client they interact with. The quantitative statistics generated are often the only criteria used for assessment of call centre employees (CSA), which is in direct conflict with their desire to deliver quality calls. The disadvantages of this strategy are beginning to emerge with reports of high level of stress and turnover in the call centre industry (Datamonitor, 1998 cited in Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2002; Deloitte Touche Consulting Group, 1999 cited in Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2002; Kinnie et al., 2000 cited in Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2002). Absenteeism and personnel turnover are important problems for many call centres and represent significant disadvantages for organisations that use call centres (Bakker et al., 2003). Not all people have the behavioural composition to work successfully in a call centre and as a result staff turnover is a serious challenge in these operations (Bester, 2008).

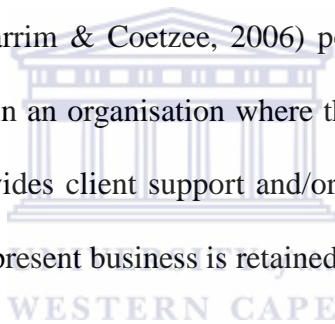


Research in call centres has shown that lack of job control, role stress, performance monitoring, inadequate coaching and training, emotional labour, and lack of team leader support can all lead to job stress including depression, emotional exhaustion, and anxiety. These studies are informative since they all add to the knowledge regarding working conditions that may undermine well-being in call centres (Bakker et al., 2003). Therefore the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between stress, burnout and emotional labour on call centre employees' and their intentions to leave the call centre environment. The study was conducted at a call centre of one of the leading retail organisations in South Africa.

2.2 DEFINITION OF A CALL CENTRE

A call centre may be defined as “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 use of display screen equipment and the instant access to, and inputting of information” (Holman, 2003, p. 76 cited in Milner, Fisher & Latif, 2007).

Similarly, Nel and De Villiers (2004 cited in Carrim & Coetzee, 2006); Sprigg and Smith and Jackson (2003 cited in Carrim & Coetzee, 2006) posit that, the term “call centre” refers to the environment within an organisation where the call centre employee, via the medium of the telephone, provides client support and/or a sales channel through which new business is generated and present business is retained



A call centre is also defined as a place where as little as three telephones handle organisational issues (Rademeyer in Moller et al., 2004 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006). It is therefore seen as a business that integrates advanced technology with an effectively designed business process and human resources (Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006).

Richardson and Marshall (1996) define call centres as offices providing a variety of sales, marketing and information services remotely by telephone, hence, replacing the need for face-to-face interaction with customers (Richardson, 1994 cited in Richardson, Belt & Marshall, 2000).

According to Bester (2008), a call centre is an operation where people communicate with customers by means of telephonic contact with clients. Bester's view is that a contact centre is more than a call centre, it is an operation where people communicate with customers by means of multimedia, that is, telephone, internet, e-mail, fax and so on. The purpose of a call centre could be to provide customer service, technical support for products that the customer might have bought, do sales, collect outstanding debt and provide advice.

Call centres can also be viewed as a nexus of customer information that can be translated into marketing strategy and product/service development. Significant advantages associated with call centres are defined by an increased opportunity to deliver, maintain, capture and recapture customer satisfaction (Ruyter, Wetzels & Feinberg, 2001).

Leyshon (1995 cited in Richardson, Belt & Marshall, 2000) purport that call centres represent one of a number of ways in which the 'space shrinking' character of information and communications technologies offers opportunities for business in geographically remote areas to overcome the 'friction of distance', and to move relatively closer to central areas, thereby participating in new ways in trade

In call centres, service is rendered by customer service representatives (CSR)/call centre employees. They are the frontline employees whose primary task is to interact with customers by means of the telephone, hence the name call centre. A customer service representative is described as someone sitting at a table in front of his/ her computer,

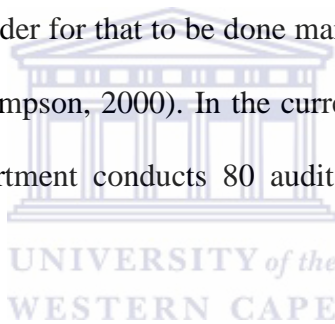
wearing a headset, talking to customers while simultaneously entering data into the computer, if needed (Zapf, Isic, Bechtoldt & Blau, 2003).

2.3 THE DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS OF A CALL CENTRE

Healy and Bramble (2003 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006) delineated call centres according to three criteria. Firstly, employees are in direct contact with clients, either through dealing with inbound calls, initiating outbound calls, or performing some combination of these roles. Secondly, call centres combine telecommunications and information systems technologies in a way that allows employees to interface with customers on the phone, while simultaneously entering information into a specialised computer programme. Finally, they facilitate managerial control over the labour process, through automatic call distribution (ACD) or predictive dialling systems, which distribute and set the pace of work, while simultaneously monitoring employee performance through real-time statistical displays. This creates an unprecedented degree of control, which is considered essential to the efficient functioning of the call centre.

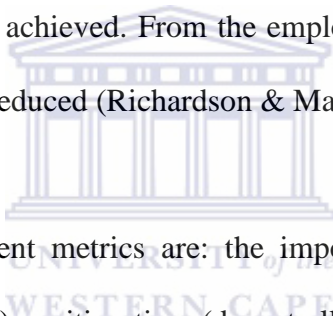
Taylor (in Paulet, 2004 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006) suggests a number of aspects that differentiate call centres from other industries. These include the use of technology to control the nature of work, service activities that can be provided from any location, a geographically mobile industry, employees that have access to any information by the “touch of a button,” and the substantial amount of control and surveillance over employees, resulting in distinctive work relationships and labour processes.

Call centres use an automated call distribution system (ACD). The system receives inbound calls it automatically allocate them to call centre employees, place calls in a queue and (in conjunction with other software) offer sophisticated management information gathering packages. Within such a system call centre employees take on average 120 calls a day. Each call lasts around 180 seconds and is split into two main parts: talk time (160 seconds) and post call wrap up time (20 seconds). The time between calls is also measured and, reflecting its nonproductive nature, is known by management as 'white space'. Every call is recorded for security and quality purposes. For security purposes if there is a dispute there needs to be a record, but also feedback is given on performance on a call and in order for that to be done managers need to listen back to the (call audits) (Callaghan & Thompson, 2000). In the current study each team manager in the outbound/collections department conducts 80 audits a week for their teams (call centre employees).



The ACD can work out if the first employee which it is programmed to flow the call to is engaged, and will pass the call to the next available employee. A large call centre is likely to divide staff into a number of specialist units, to serve different customer segments. In these circumstances, a separate telephone number will be allocated to each group of customers. The ACD will recognise the number and flow the work to the correct unit. Most ACDs now also have the capacity to inform callers that all employees are busy and queue the caller telling them how long they will be expected to wait (Callaghan & Thompson, 2000).

More sophisticated ACDs also have voice response mechanisms and can obtain basic information from the caller to speed up the interface time between caller and employee. ACDs then are used to speed up work, but crucially they also control and monitor workflow. For example, they monitor ' wrap-up ' time that is, the time that it takes an employee to carry out post-call data-input and move onto the next call. They monitor the time employees take on calls and (in sales functions) whether a sale is made. They also provide real time statistics on call flow and employee availability, thus allowing real-time reconfiguration of staff resources. These statistics also facilitate performance related pay. Thus, from the employer's point of view, labour and the labour process can be better controlled and efficiency gains achieved. From the employee's point of view, autonomy and control over work may be reduced (Richardson & Marshall, 1996).



The most common measurement metrics are: the importance of short response time (answering phone calls quickly), waiting time (do not allow the consumer to wait in the queue too long), and employee productivity (how many calls can a TSR [telephone service representative] /call centre employee close in a given period of time). In general these could appear to conflict with maximizing customizing services to a customer's needs (Kelley, 1989 cited in Ruyter, Wetzels & Feinberg, 2001) thereby maximizing customer/caller satisfaction (Ruyter, Wetzels & Feinberg, 2001).

A common stereotype regarding call centre work is that managing phone-based customer interactions all day is seen to be neither complicated nor demanding as most interactions are basic, simple, and scripted. This stereotype, however, is not corroborated by recent

research. On the contrary, the majority of previous studies have shown that the work of call centre employees is very demanding with respect to various aspects. In order to do the job correctly, call centre employees have to perform several attention consuming, simultaneous subtasks such as controlling the call via the deployment of sophisticated listening and questioning skills, operating a keyboard to input data into computers, reading often detailed information from a visual display unit, and speaking to customers. Furthermore, as many customers are subjected to long waiting times their satisfaction is negatively affected and thus these tasks are often conducted under high time pressure (Wegge, Van Dick, Fisher, Wecking & Moltzen, 2006).

Moreover, phone calls with customers are usually short (for example, 2-5 minutes) and therefore a call centre employee often communicates with many different customers each day; sometimes with about 100 customers during a typical 8 hour shift. Continuously keeping track of to whom you are speaking to and the frequent readjustment to new customers is a further non-trivial attention requirement.

In order to carry out their duties successfully, call centre employees require specific attributes, such as the ability to maintain good customer relations and deal with constant technological change. The ability to adapt to fast changing circumstances, to anticipate, and to deal with complaints is therefore essential for success in this environment (Nel & De Villiers, 2004 cited in Carrim & Coetzee, 2006). In addition, call centre employees must be able to remain calm and controlled even when facing abuse from customers in

order to uphold the company's standard of quality service (Lewig & Dollard, 2003 cited in Carrim & Coetzee, 2006).

There are many different types of call centres, with the differentiating factors being whether calls are inbound or outbound. An *inbound* call centre is where the customer makes the phone call, usually for customer service or support (Callaghan & Thompson, 2000; Kalleberg, 2000). Inbound call centres mainly respond to incoming calls and primarily deal with questions and complaints that customers may have. Clients' questions are frequently straightforward and simple requiring standard answers, but sometimes clients have complex requests for help requiring non-standard answers (Dormann & Zijlstra, 2003; Kalleberg, 2000).



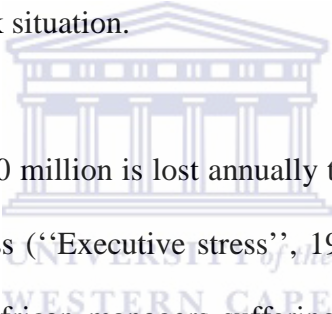
According to Bester (2008), an *outbound* call centre is where the call centre employee contacts the customer usually to do a sales pitch or to collect outstanding debt, the difference between the Inbound and outbound department is the degree of product complexity and variability, and the depth of knowledge required to deal with the service interaction. They are mainly for contacts that are initiated by the organisation, and primarily for attempts to sell a product or service (Dormann & Zijlstra, 2003).

The current study focuses on an outbound call centre.

2.4 STRESS

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Stress is a major side of human life that affects almost every aspect of functioning, including health and illness (Cruess, Schneiderman, Antoni & Penedo, 2004). There is strong evidence suggesting that stressful conditions are involved in the development and progress of many chronic diseases (Irwin, 2002; Kiecolt-Glaser, McGuire, Robles & Glaser, 2002; Kubzansky & Kawachi, 2000), as well as in the adjustment to chronic illnesses (Cruess et al., 2004; Luecken & Compas, 2002 cited in Karademas, Karamvakalis & Zarogiannos, 2009). Increased demands and accompanying high stress are carried over to the non-work situation.



In South Africa more than R500 million is lost annually through absenteeism and loss of productivity as a result of stress (“Executive stress”, 1991 cited in Spangenberg & Or Pen-lyall, 2000), with South African managers suffering from high levels of job stress (Strumpfer, 1989 cited in Spangenberg & Or Pen-lyall, 2000; Van Zyl, 1993 cited in Spangenberg & Or Pen-lyall, 2000). Occupational stress theorists suggest that destructive outcomes such as psychological distress, absenteeism, physical illness and poor work performance are caused by a combination of individual characteristics and characteristics of the work environment (Beehr, 1995; Katz & Kahn, 1978 cited in Spangenberg & Or Pen-lyall, 2000).

Kruger (1988, p. 2 cited in Van Zyl, 2002) explains stress follows: “It is acknowledged that work stress creates an emotional climate that can be transmitted to the home and

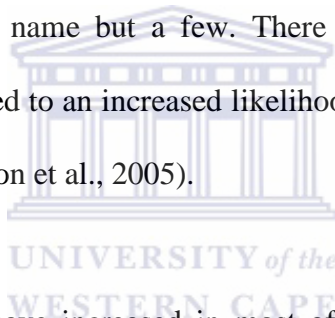
affect the dynamics of family life.” Work stress affects not only the employee, but spills over and influences other people with whom the individual interacts, such as spouse and children. Work stress has been related to the marital relationship, to parenting and psychological adjustment. An investigation conducted in South Africa (Van Zyl, 1993 cited in Van Zyl, 2002), indicated that 34.7 % Coloureds, 38.1 % Whites, 38.1 Asians and 35 % Black South Africans suffer from high stress (Van Zyl, 2002).

Hans Selye, the third and final pioneer in the history of stress, popularised and formalised the concept by establishing that (1) an individual’s body has a similar set of responses to a broad range of stressors (which he named the General Adaptation Syndrome), and (2) under specific conditions these stressors will adversely affect an individual’s health. Selye, gaining much of the theoretical foundation for his work from Cannon, acknowledged stress responses as a necessary component of the adaptive process, yet observed that severe, chronic exposure resulted in tissue damage and disease (Selye, 1956).

In the past several decades enormous changes have been witnessed in society generally and in workplaces in particular (Dive, 2002 cited in Kenny & Cooper, 2003). Claims that the problems of workplace stress have grown in many countries have prompted research over the past couple of decades, primarily research establishing the link between stress and ill health and between job stressors and strain outcomes (Cooper, 2001 cited in Kenny & Cooper, 2003; Warr, 1999 cited in Kenny & Cooper, 2003).

At best, work stress can be a source of great excitement and a stimulus for achievement. At worst, it can seriously impair people's quality of work life, and reduce both their personal and job effectiveness. According to Matlhape (2001 cited in Yende, 2005), the increasing competition in the corporate sector, both locally and globally, is a major contributory factor to work stress.

The stress experienced by different occupation types and job roles has been discussed in many papers with a number of different occupations being described as experiencing above average levels of stress, for example, teachers, healthcare, nurses, social workers, and the ambulance service to name but a few. There are a number of work related stressors which have been linked to an increased likelihood of an individual experiencing negative stress outcome (Johnson et al., 2005).



Stress at work is claimed to have increased in most of the developed and developing world (Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2001 cited in Kenny & Cooper, 2003). The drive toward manpower cost-cutting has led to fewer people doing more work and feeling more insecure in their jobs. The rapid expansion of information technology through the internet has meant the added burden of information overload, the accelerating pace of work, and demands for immediacy of response in 7 day–24 hour work cultures. Hours of work have also increased in many countries, which have had adverse effects on the two earner family (which is now in many countries the most common family unit). As a consequence, lack of work-life balance has moved up the agenda of work-related sources

of stress in many employee surveys (Worrall & Cooper, 2001 cited in Kenny & Cooper, 2003).

Work-related stress has recently become a major occupational health issue. It accounts for over a third of all new incidences of ill health. Each case of work-related stress, depression or anxiety leads to an average of 30.2 working days lost (Health and Safety Executive, 2008 cited in Smith, 2009).

2.4.2 DEFINITION OF STRESS

Finding a particular agreed-upon definition of stress is like finding the proverbial needle in a haystack, Stress is a dynamic condition where there is a perceived, significant imbalance between demand and response capability, under circumstances where failure to meet the demand has vital, perceived consequences (Robbins, 2003).

Stress is when the perceived pressure exceeds your perceived ability to cope (Palmer et al., 2003 cited in Lawless & Allan, 2004). Stress is thus always perceived; a situation is only stressful for a given individual – not for all individuals. An external viewer cannot label an experience as stressful unless the subject displays physiological symptoms of stress, and there is a medical diagnosis concluding that stress is the cause, or the subject states that they have experienced stress (Lawless & Allan, 2004). Jacobs (2001, p. 1 cited in Van Zyl, 2002) defines stress as follows: “Stress is a reality of life; it is unavoidable, good and bad, constructive and destructive.”

Work stress in particular is the perceived failure to cope with job demands; a perception that is often expressed as anxiety or tension. Stressors are environmental characteristics that may stimulate feelings of stress. In the medical model, stress is implicated in infectious disease. The infectious disease connection is associated with depressed immune system functioning as well as related diseases such as upper respiratory problems. However, there is a paucity of research that explicitly and independently measures stress, physical illness, and absenteeism (John, 1994 cited in Yende, 2005).

Endocrinologist Hans Selye described the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) where initial observations about infectious reactions led to the discovery that stress can lead to infection, illness, disease and death. According to Hans (1964) there are three stages that Selye discovered, namely: Alarm, Resistance and Exhaustion.

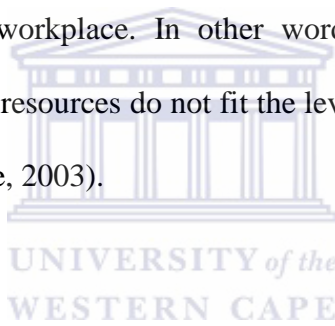
Alarm - When individuals are surprised or threatened, they have an immediate physical reaction, often called the fight-or-flight reaction. This prepares the body for life-threatening situations, channelling away resources from such as the digestive and immune system to more immediate muscular and emotional needs. This leads to the immune system being depressed, making individuals susceptible to disease.

Resistance - As individuals become used to the stress levels, they initially become more resistance to disease, which leads individuals to believe they can easily adapt to these

more stressful situations. However, this is only the immune system fighting to keep up with demands and expectations, but requires it to work at abnormally high levels.

Exhaustion - Eventually reality kicks in and individuals' bodies give up on trying to maintain a high level of stress. Parts of the body literally start to break down and individuals become very unwell. If individuals continue to fight this situation, they may even die.

In conclusion, there are many definitions, models and theories of how individuals are predisposed to stress in the workplace. In other words, a stressful situation would manifest where an individual's resources do not fit the level of demand and where coping strategies are constrained (Cope, 2003).



2.4.3 MODELS OF STRESS

There are many models of stress but to keep it within the context of the present study, only three broad approaches to stress are discussed briefly. The stimulus based, response based and transactional models of stress are the three widely acknowledged models of stress (Rice, 1992 cited in Naidu, 2000; Bailey & Clarke, 1989 cited in Naidu, 2000).

2.4.3.1 THE STIMULUS BASED MODEL

The stimulus based model views stress as an independent variable, an external source applied to an individual (Sutherland & Cooper, 1995 cited in Naidu, 2000). Macpherson in 1974 used the analogy that the individual responds to stress just as in physics; metal

responds to a load by undergoing deformation. It is therefore the stimulus to which the individual responds that is considered to be stress. An example would be a student who feels strained by examinations, the examination is considered to be the stress. His reaction to this stress is therefore the dependent variable (Cooper & Sutherland, 1995 cited in Naidu, 2000).

2.4.3.2 THE RESPONSE BASED MODEL

The response based model views stress as the individual's physiological response to environmental changes or threats (Sutherland & Cooper, 1995 cited in Naidu, 2000; Rice, 1992 cited in Naidu, 2000). The authors described the work of Hans Selye, an endocrinologist, who was the pioneer in the field of stress and stress research. He used the terms stressor and stress to differentiate between the cause and effect respectively. He looked at the individual's response to a stressor from a physiological point of view, where stress was a highly stereotyped sequence of physiological events (Naidu, 2000).

2.4.3.3 THE TRANSACTIONAL MODEL

The transactional model views stress from a psychological point of view, while still taking the physiological responses to stress into account. Sutherland and Cooper (1995 cited in Naidu, 2000) described the work of Richard Lazarus, a psychologist and researcher in the field of stress. Lazarus concurs with Selye's theory of the response to stimuli, but criticized him for not taking the individual's perception of the situation into account. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984 cited in Naidu, 2000), and Sutherland and Cooper (1995 cited in Naidu, 2000), an individual responds to stressors depending on

their vulnerability, feelings of threat and ability to cope with certain situation. A particular event may be taxing or exceed an individual's resources, thereby endangering his or her wellbeing (Sutherland & Cooper, 1995 cited in Naidu, 2000). These stressors are a combination between the psychological and social factors individuals are exposed to, hence the term psychosocial stressors (Sarafino, 1998 cited in Naidu, 2000; White & Moorey, 1997 cited in Naidu, 2000).

In the clinical stress literature, the stress response (that is, strain) is viewed as the result of an interaction between person and environment. Applied to occupational stress, the specific components of this tripartite transactional model are the work environment, the person, and strain (Guglielmi & Kristin, 1998).

According to Guglielmi and Kristin (1998), strain can be measured in terms of:

- (a) Physiological dysfunction (for example, cardiovascular changes, immunosuppressant, and generally "stress-related" symptoms and illnesses),
- (b) Psychological dysfunction (for example, depression, anxiety), and
- (c) Behavioral dysfunction (for example, smoking, drinking, absenteeism, unhealthy eating habits).

2.4.4 OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Occupational stress has been identified more frequently in jobs low in autonomy and highly physically and psychologically demanding (Sutherland & Cooper 1990 cited in Tully, 2004). Over the last 15 to 20 years, numerous etiological models have been offered

to address the question of how and under what circumstances work stress may lead to strain (defined as psychological dysfunction, physiological dysfunction, or both). Many of these formulations are consistent with a generally accepted metamodel in stress research according to which the relationship between stress and strain is mediated, moderated, or modified by individual difference variables (Guglielmi & Kristin, 1998).

According to Straub (2002); Johnson (2001); Cox (1978); Pienaar and Rothmann (2006); O’driscoll and Cooper (2002), Consequences of continuous high levels of work-stress are: elevated absenteeism and employee turnover rates, loss of productivity, and expenses in terms of employee health. Mismanaged or ignored occupational stress will generate distress for the individual, and ultimately extend into detrimental outcomes for the organisation (O’Driscoll & Cooper, 2002). The impact of occupational stress is often short-term and without the provoking of chronic psychological or physical consequences (Straub, 2002; Cox, 1978).

2.4.4.1 OCCUPATIONAL AND STRAIN MODELS:

Only a few models are briefly introduced in order to contextualize the present study.

a) Person-Environment Fit Model

The Person-Environment Fit Model, developed in the mid-1970s at the University of Michigan (Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, & Pinneau, 1975; Van Harrison, 1978) suggests that strain is the result of a mismatch between the requirements and demands of the job and the person's real or perceived ability to meet those demands. Individual

differences in perceptions, skills, tolerance for job pressure, and vulnerability to dysfunctional outcomes are the key modifiers of the stress-strain relationship (Guglielmi & Kristen, 1998).

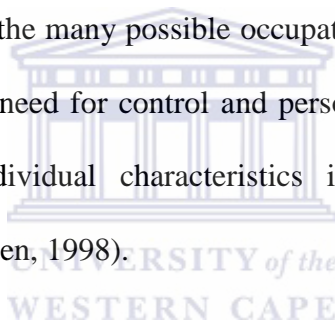
b) Demand-Control Model

The Demand-Control Model is frequently referred to as the job strain model, this formulation of occupational stress was developed by Scandinavian researchers in the late 1970s (Karasek, 1979; Karasek, Baker, Marxer, Ahlbom, & Theorell, 1981; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). The two factors that determine job strain are job demands (workload, deadlines) and decision latitude (that is, autonomy and control). The lowest amount of strain should be expected in jobs characterized by low demands and high decision latitude, whereas the greatest strain will result from the combination of high demands and low decision latitude. It should also be pointed out that, in contrast with the other occupational stress models, this formulation does not view individual difference characteristics as important in mediating the stress-strain relationship. Decision latitude and control are seen as characteristics of the job itself, not of the individual (Guglielmi & Kristen, 1998).

The Demand-Control Model has stimulated the greatest amount of research and is generally acknowledged as the dominant theoretical perspective in the occupational stress area. This model allows specific predictions about which particular aspects of the work environment result in strain and which occupations are more vulnerable (Guglielmi & Kristen, 1998).

c) Effort-Reward Model

The Effort-Reward Model, proposed by Siegrist and his associates (Siegrist, 1996; Siegrist, Peter, Junge, Cremer, & Seidel, 1990), purport that effort refers both to objective working conditions that are taxing (example, workload, deadlines) and to intrinsic attempts to cope and establish control. Reward, on the other hand, refers to job benefits, promotion prospects, and job security, as well as decision latitude and control. According to this model, when the amount of effort required and expended exceeds the occupational rewards attained the individual will experience stress and may suffer health problems. This model could be considered an expanded version of the Demand-Control Model in that decision latitude is one of the many possible occupational rewards. Unlike its parent model, however, the focus on need for control and personal coping patterns again calls attention to the role of individual characteristics in modifying the stress-strain relationship (Guglielmi & Kristen, 1998).



d) Demands-Supports-Constraints Model

The Demands-Supports-Constraints Model is also an amplification of the basic Demand-Control Model (Payne, 1979; Payne & Fletcher, 1983). Here, lack of decision latitude is only one of many possible factors that may limit and constrain the worker. Constraint, coupled with lack of support and resources in the context of high demands, leads to strain (Guglielmi & Kristen, 1998).

e) Effort-Distress Model

The Effort-Distress Model is another Scandinavian contribution related to the Demand-Control Model (Frankenhaeuser, 1983, 1991). According to this model, the great deal of effort required by jobs that place high demands on the individual does not inevitably result in strain. It is the distress experienced when the job demands are not mitigated by personal control and decision latitude that will produce strain (Guglielmi & Kristen, 1998).

2.4.5 SOURCES OF STRESS

There are a number of work related stressors which have been linked to an increased likelihood of an individual experiencing negative stress outcome. Cooper and Marshall's (1976 cited in Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Taylor & Millet, 2005) original model of work related stress included five sources of stress at work (Robertson Cooper, 2002 cited in Johnson et al., 2005). The components of these sources are:

- (1) Intrinsic to the job – this entails factors such as poor physical working conditions, work overload or time pressures;
- (2) role in the organisation – this entails including role ambiguity and role conflict;
- (3) career development – this entails lack of job security and under/over promotion;
- (4) relationships at work – this entails poor relationships with your boss or colleagues, an extreme component of which is bullying in the workplace and
- (5) organisational structure and climate – this entails little involvement in decision-making and office politics.

Two unique stressors associated with human service work are emotional dissonance, particularly the need to hide negative emotions (emotion work), and client/customer-related social stressors. The latter may involve disproportionate or ambiguous client/customer expectations and/or verbally aggressive customers. These stressors affect all human service workers, even though they may vary in the extent to which their work involves lasting relationships with clients/customers, and in the amount of training they have received to deal with client/customer-related social stressors (Dollard, Dormann, Boyd & Winfield, 2003).

Additional sources of stress are the impact a person's working life has on their life outside of work (work-life balance), the amount of satisfaction people derive from their work, the amount of control and autonomy people have in the workplace, and levels of commitment in the workplace both from the employee to the organisation and from the organisation to the employee. The amount of stress a person experiences at work is likely to be a result of the interaction of a number of factors such as the type of work they are doing (their occupation), the presence of work stressors, the amount of support they receive (their occupation), both at work and at home and the coping mechanisms they use to deal with stress (Johnson et al., 2005).

Different occupations will have different basic stressors, for example, the threat of work-related stress, violence, lack of control over work decisions or long working hours. However, people working in the same occupation will also experience different levels of stress due to the interplay of many other factors, for example, their personality type and

the support mechanisms they have available to them. It is not possible therefore, to say that all people working in a certain occupation will experience the same amount of stress. It is however, reasonable to state that employees working in high-risk occupations will have an increased likelihood of experiencing negative stress outcomes (Johnson et al., 2005).

2.4.6 STRESSORS AND WORK

Stress at work is claimed to have increased in most of the developed and developing world (Cooper, Dewe, & O’Driscoll, 2001). The drive toward manpower cost-cutting has led to fewer people doing more work and feeling more insecure in their jobs. The rapid expansion of information technology through the internet has meant the added burden of information overload, the accelerating pace of work, and demands for immediacy of response in 7 day–24 hour work cultures. Hours of work have also increased in many countries, which has had adverse effects on the two earner family (which is now in many countries the most common family unit). As a consequence, lack of work-life balance has moved up the agenda of work-related sources of stress in many employee surveys (Worrall & Cooper, 2001). O’Driscoll et al. (2003) examine the effect of organisational family-responsive policies on work and family roles. They conclude that although many organisations may introduce these initiatives as mechanisms to reduce strain among their employees, the policies by themselves may be insufficient to generate significant stress reduction. Rather, development of an organisational culture that is perceived to be supportive of work–family balance may be a necessary condition for the alleviation of work–family conflict and related negative effects (Kenny & Cooper, 2003).

It seems that stress and related health problems result in great costs within the organisational context. In this regard Everley and Fieldman (1991, p. 6 cited in Van Zyl, 2002) state: “This relentless upward spiral of health benefit costs is taking its toll throughout industry. Each year corporations are forced to allocate a large share of their operating expenses just to provide employee health benefits, resulting in higher consumer prices or lower profits, or both.” The direct costs of stress and the resulting poor performance show up in a number of ways.

Therefore numerous research studies (Ivancevich, Mattheson 1996 cited in Van Zyl, 2002; Carstens, 1989 cited in Van Zyl, 2002; Quick, Murphy & Hurrell, 1992 cited in Van Zyl, 2002; Jacobs, 2001 cited in Van Zyl, 2002) have shown that individuals experiencing stress:

- make errors,
- are absent more often,
- must be replaced more frequently,
- are involved in work accidents, strikes as well as work slowdowns.

It has been estimated that South Africa loses approximately R500 million each year just in absenteeism and to a loss in productivity (National Council for Mental Health, 1991 cited in Van Zyl, 2002).

Indirect costs include the question of the cost of lost opportunities. Research (Schaufeli, Maslach & Marek, 1993 cited in Van Zyl, 2002) demonstrates that stressed employees

are less creative, less effective decision-makers and inadequate communicators. Who can say what an organisation might gain by a 3 % increase in decision-making effectiveness or a 5 % increase in creativity? Other indirect costs due to high stress can include a lack of confidence in management and colleagues, poor labour relations, low morale, etcetera. (Van Zyl, 2002).

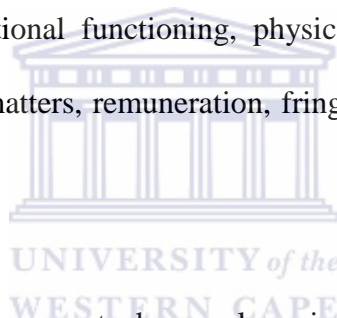
2.4.6.1 JOB STRESSORS

Similarly to call centre employees, firefighters are seen as human service professions, reference is therefore made to a study conducted by Oosthuizen and Koortzen (2007) amongst fire fighters, the researchers categorised the job stressors of fire fighters in two distinguishable areas namely, stressors arising outside the work situation and stressors originating within the work situation. The causes of the stressors arising outside the work situation were characterised by marital dysfunction and divorce, limited time with family, problems with children, and lifestyle factors such as the abuse of alcohol, excessive smoking and lack of exercise (Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Further issues included the long shifts which interfere with their sex lives, loss of friends (non fire fighters), suicide of colleagues or family members, lower social status, anger and frustration at home or in the family, emotional, intellectual and physical exhaustion, wives being alone at night and not being available to help the family when needed (He, Zhao & Archbold, 2002; Shakespeare-Finch et al., 2002).

In Rehabilitation in South Africa (1991 cited in Van Zyl, 2002), the following signs of high stress are listed (Van Zyl, 2002):

- A sudden high incidence of absence from work,
- A sudden tendency towards isolation and withdrawal,
- Initiative and creativity suddenly decrease a lot,
- Person is moody and has emotional outbursts,
- Person is hyper-sensitive to criticism,
- Person has a sudden loss of drive and motivation and the,
- Person suddenly becomes absent-minded.

The causes of the stressors originating within the work situation manifest in terms of tasks characteristics, organisational functioning, physical working conditions and job equipment, career and social matters, remuneration, fringe benefits and personnel policy (Waters, 2002).



The degree of uncertainty, exposure to human loss, interpersonal tension, shift work, overloading, under loading and traumatic incidents were flagged as main task characteristics stressors (Lemanski & Samuels, 2003; Regehr, Johanis, Dimitropoulos, Bartram & Hope, 2003).

2.4.6.2 ROLE STRESS

Role stress occurs in employee jobs that involve direct customer contact whether in the context of a face-to-face or a telephone service encounter (Babin & Boles, 1996 cited in Ruyter, Wetzels and Feinberg, 2001; Brown & Peterson, 1993 cited in Ruyter et al., 2001; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964 cited in Ruyter et al., 2001).

Ruyter, Wetzels & Feinberg (2001) identified role conflict and role ambiguity as the two key components of role stress.

Role conflict has been defined as “the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other” (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 19, cited in Ruyter et al., 2001).

For call centre personnel, expectations of the organisation, the supervisor or team leaders stressing operational efficiency may clash with the demands of customers who want problem resolution or satisfaction. In many instances supervisors focus on technology to speed up the process of customer interaction, not realizing that a critical element of call centre employee performance is the level of satisfaction based on meeting customer expectations. Furthermore, call centres are typically a setting in which electronic performance monitoring takes place, and recent empirical work has shown that this is a major factor of job stress (Aiello & Kolb, 1995; Silverman & Smith, 1995 cited in Ruyter et al., 2001).

Role ambiguity occurs when a person does not have access to sufficient information to perform his or her role as a service employee adequately (Walker, Churchill, & Ford, 1975 cited in Ruyter et al., 2001).

Role ambiguity may result when the call centre employee is uncertain about the supervisory expectations or when they do not know how their performance will be

evaluated. More specifically, a frequently encountered problem for which no supervisory guidelines exist is how to deal with repeater or prank calls (Ingram, 1994 cited in cited in Ruyter et al., 2001). Ruyter, Wetzels and Feinberg (2001) highlighted that they however could not find any studies of this nature in this growing industry.

2.4.6.3 WORK-HOME INTERFERENCE (WHI)

With regards to the sequence between Work-Home Interference (WHI) and job stressors, there exist two competing approaches (Peeters, de Jonge, Janssen & van der Linden, 2004):

- (a) the *classical approach* and
- (b) the *reverse causation* approach.



A first possibility that can be placed within the classical approach is the assumption that WHI is a job stressor in itself that (next to other job stressors) has adverse effects on health and well-being. Another possibility that can also be placed within the classical approach is the more elaborate assumption that certain job stressors cause WHI and, as a result, lead to strain (Peeters et al., 2004). For instance, the results of a study conducted by Kinnunen and Mauno (1998 cited in Peeters et al., 2004) showed that having a full-time job, lack of a supportive relationship with one's superior, and number of children appeared to be important antecedents of WHI, which in turn, was significantly related to job anxiety, job depression, job exhaustion, and psychosomatic complaints. Another study conducted amongst Dutch residents revealed that an unfavourable work time schedule, a high quantitative workload, and a troublesome relationship with the superior

were important antecedents of WHI, which in turn, was significantly associated with psychosomatic health complaints, sleep deprivation, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization (Geurts, Rutte & Peeters, 1999 cited in Peeters et al., 2004).

In a similar vein, Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk and Beutell (1996 cited in Peeters et al., 2004) found that male and female entrepreneurs who experienced work-role overload reported higher levels of negative WHI, which, in turn, was related to their general life stress.

Findings from a study among newspaper managers, found, for instance, only a partial mediation role of WHI in the relation between emotional job demands and exhaustion (Peeters et al., 2004). Geurts, Kompier, Roxburgh and Houtman (2003 cited in Peeters et al., 2004) also found that WHI fully mediated the relationship of workload with depressive mood and health complaints and partially mediated the relationship with work-related negative affect. Geurts et al. (2003 cited in Peeters et al., 2004) concluded that WHI might play a more crucial mediating role with respect to general indicators of well-being than with respect to work-related indicators of well-being (Peeters et al., 2004).

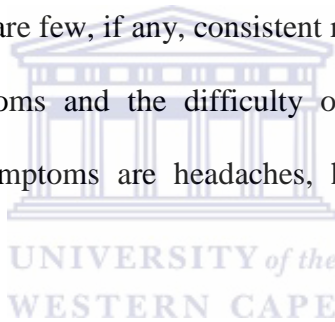
2.4.7 SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Stress manifests itself in a number of ways. For instance, an individual who is experiencing a high level of stress may develop high blood pressure, ulcers, irritability, difficulty in making routine decisions, loss of appetite, accident proneness, and the like.

These can be subsumed under three general categories: physiological, psychological, and behavioral symptoms (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt, 2003).

2.4.7.1 PHYSIOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

Most of the early concern with stress was directed at physiological symptoms. This was predominantly due to the fact that the topic was researched by specialists in the health and medical sciences. This led to the conclusion that stress could create changes in metabolism, increase heart and breathing rates, increase blood pressure, bring on headaches, and induce heart attacks. The link between stress and particular physiological symptoms is not clear as there are few, if any, consistent relationships. This is attributed to the complexity of the symptoms and the difficulty of measuring them objectively; examples of physiological symptoms are headaches, high blood pressure and heart disease (Robbins et al., 2003).



According to Dollard (2002), when the challenge of experiencing a stressful event is short term the body's first reaction is adaptive, enabling the person to set in action energy resources to combat the stressor, however when these challenges are continuous, severe or repetitive the "normal physiological reaction may turn pathological" (Dollard, 2002, p. 6).

2.4.7.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

According to Robbins, Odendaal and Roodt (2003, p. 423), job-related stress can cause job-related dissatisfaction. Job dissatisfaction is "the simplest and most obvious

psychological effect” of stress. But stress manifests itself in other psychological states, for instance, tension, anxiety, irritability, boredom, and procrastination.

Evidence indicates that when people are placed in jobs that make multiple and conflicting demands or in which there is a lack of clarity as to the incumbent’s duties, authority and responsibilities, both stress and dissatisfaction are increased. Similarly, the less people have control over the pace of their work, the greater the stress and dissatisfaction. While more research is needed to clarify the relationship, the evidence suggests that jobs that provide a low level of variety, significance, autonomy, feedback, and identity tend to create stress and reduce satisfaction and involvement in the job (Robbins et al., 2003).

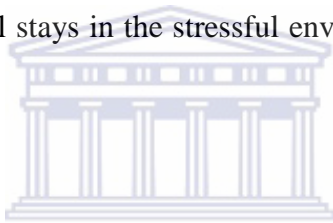
2.4.7.3 BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS

Behaviour-related stress symptoms include changes in productivity, absence, and turnover, as well as changes in eating habits, increased smoking or consumption of alcohol, rapid speech, fidgeting, and sleep disorders. There has been a significant amount of research investigating the stress-performance relationship (Robbins et al., 2003).

The most widely studied pattern in the stress-performance literature is the inverted-U relationship. The logic underlying the inverted U is that low to moderate levels of stress stimulate the body and increase its ability to react. Individuals then often perform their tasks better, more intensely, or more rapidly. But too much stress places unattainable demands (which is the loss of something desired) or constraints (which is forces that prevent individuals from doing what they desire) on a person, which results in lower

performance. This inverted-U pattern may also describe the reaction to stress over time, as well as to changes in stress intensity. That is, even moderate levels of stress can have a negative influence on performance over the long term as the continued intensity of the stress wears down the individual and saps his or her energy resources (Robbins et al., 2003).

Chen and Spector (1992) found that the most significant reaction to work stressors was the intention to quit. Staying away from work or quitting one's work due to stress is a flight response to the situation, which may be a far healthier response than a fight reaction, in which an individual stays in the stressful environment and becomes angry/or aggressive.



2.4.8 STRESS FACTORS FOR CALL CENTRE EMPLOYEES

Call centre employees' jobs are characterized by repetitive movements, while complex information is processed. Meanwhile, communication skills and efficiency are expected. Call centre employees also often work in noisy environments under high time pressure, and their performance is usually monitored on line (Ferreira & Saldiva, 2002). Some scholars have argued that call centre jobs are an expression of an advanced form of Taylorism (Knights & McCabe, 1998; Taylor & Bain, 1999).

Furthermore, the perceptions of customers regarding the quality of service provided by the call centre are dependent on the performance of the individual employees within the call centre (Burns, 1995 cited in White & Roos, 2005). Call centre employees act as a

contact point between the customer and the company, and can therefore be regarded as the “source of differentiation” (Burgers et al., 2000, p.2 cited in White & Roos, 2005). As a result, effective call centre employees can create a competitive advantage (Stauss & Mang, 1999 cited in White & Roos, 2005). When customers are delighted with the performance of the call centre employee, they will, as a result, continue their relation with the given organisation, which in turn impacts on business competitiveness (Stauss & Mang, 1999 cited in White & Roos, 2005). The perceptions of customers regarding the quality of service provided by the call centre are dependent on the performance of the individual employees within the call centre (Burns, 1995 cited in White & Roos, 2005).

Accordingly, attention to individual personality traits as a means of predicting an employee’s behaviour has become one of the most prominent features of recruiting in organisations today (Carr, De la Garza & Vorster 2002 cited in Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006; Du Toit, Coetzee & Visser 2005 cited in Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006). Sprigg (2004 cited in Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006) states that call centre employees tend to be paid low salaries and they experience poor working conditions.

In addition, call centre employees generally do not seem to receive much praise or acknowledgement from supervisors for having performed well on the job and furthermore, there are too few incentive schemes. Instead employees are closely monitored but the feedback received from supervisors appears to be limited to non-performance. All this results in feelings of dissatisfaction among call centre employees (Buchanan & Koch-Schulte 2000 cited in Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006).

Health professionals typically develop long lasting relationships with their clients whereas call centre workers may have only a single brief interaction. In accordance with contemporary theories of work stress (conservation of resources, effort-reward imbalance, demand-control-support), it is argued that social support and training designed to develop “role separation” are crucial resources needed to help human service workers cope with the unique stressors of their jobs (Dollard et al., 2003).

2.4.9 COPING RESPONSES

Some aspects of the match between worker and occupational demands may derive from the personality characteristics of the worker, with self-selection of those who are “interested in people” into service occupations. However, often the availability of appropriate training will facilitate the development of strategies to cope with stressful encounters at work. Employees may thus learn optimal ways to think and behave when dealing with stressful customers. In human service jobs (such as, for example, call centres) this often implies that one has to apply strategies of how to regulate one’s own emotions (Swanepoel & Pienaar, 2004).

2.4.9.1 Types of coping strategies

Coping is the process of reducing the perceived imbalance between demands and the ability to deal with them (Lazarus, 1993 cited in Ortega, Brenner & Leather, 2007; Lazarus, 1999 cited in Ortega, Brenner & Leather, 2007). Anderson et al. (2002 cited in Swanepoel & Pienaar, 2004) further defined coping as the conscious use of cognitive or behavioural strategies to reduce perceived stress. It appears that individuals do have

consistent coping preferences or dispositions that are employed across a wide range of situations. Parkes (1986 cited in Meyer, Rothmann & Pienaar, 2003) found that coping may be influenced not only by the nature of the stressful episode but also by the resources, both intra-individual and environmental, available to the person concerned (Meyer, Rothmann & Pienaar, 2003).

Coping strategies can be classified as being either problem-focused or emotion-focused (Terry & Callan, 1997). Problem-focused strategies are directed towards managing the stressful situation, whereas emotion-focused strategies focus on dealing with the associated level of emotional distress, for instance, by relying on avoidant or escapist strategies (London, 1998 cited in Spanenberg & Or Pen-Lyall, 2000; Terry & Callan, 1997 cited in Spanenberg & Or Pen-Lyall, 2000). London (1998 cited in Spanenberg & Or Pen-Lyall, 2000) refers to the importance of social support in the workplace, for instance the extent to which managers, supervisors and co-workers encourage and support the acquisition and use of new job-related knowledge and skills. Seeking social support thus constitutes an important coping strategy (Spanenberg & Or Pen-Lyall, 2000).

2.4.9.1.1 Role Analysis

Role Analysis is aimed at clarifying an individual's work role to reduce distress, confusion and conflict. A role profile is developed based on the expectations of superiors, peers, subordinates and key people with whom the individual must work. This expected role is clarified by eliminating conflicts and confusion in expectations. It is also

integrated with an enacted role, resulting in reduced role stress for the individual (French & Bell, 1978, cited in Quick & Quick, 1984).

2.4.9.1.2 Team Building /Cooperative strategies

The aim of team building/cooperative method is to confront and resolve interpersonal conflicts that naturally evolve in work groups. The process of resolution is thought to be better than repression for the management of these interpersonal stressors (French & Bell, 1978, cited in Quick & Quick, 1984).

2.4.9.1.3 Emotion Focused coping strategies

Emotion Focused coping strategies include stress inoculation training, which combines training in physical relaxation and in cognitive strategies, including rehearsal in imagination of future stress situations, recognition and monitoring of the person's usual anxiety-provoking thoughts in a situation of stress and rehearsal of a more realistic and control self-statement, or self reward for coping successfully with the stressor. Transfer and durability of training are facilitated, because the anticipation of stress comes to trigger off the coping techniques practiced during therapy (Meichenbaum, 1993).

Bernin et al. (2003 cited in Kenny & Cooper, 2003) researched gender differences in coping behaviors in a cross-national study of managers. They conclude that coping may be culturally dependent, with more differences in coping emerging across nations than across gender. Despite the vast literature on coping processes, very little is still known about how they operate and whether they are helpful in dealing with stress. Specifically, in the work setting, coping outcome studies cannot specify which aspects of the job or work environment should be modified because individuals appraise their social and work contexts in individual ways (Kenny & Cooper, 2003).

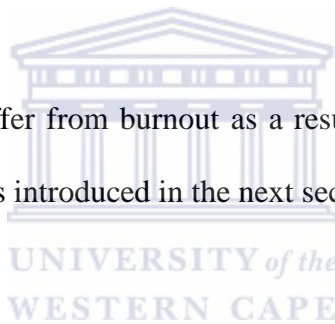
Thus, the lack of interventions, therapeutic programs, or clinical benefits arising from the coping literature is problematic for the field and has prompted some researchers to conclude that the field is disappointing in terms of its theoretical and clinical contributions to psychological adaptation under conditions of stress. Furthermore, as coping behaviors are highly correlated with personality characteristics and as the latter are resistant to change, it follows that coping behaviors will also be difficult to change (Kenny & Cooper, 2003).

In Holman's (2003) study that was conducted with a call centre, the results indicate that the causes of stress in call centres are the same as in other organisations, although certain factors such as performance monitoring may play a relatively more important role in a call centre environment. This means that the lessons learned from other organisations about how to reduce and manage employee stress may be applied to call centres as well.

2.4.10 SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

As mentioned above in the literature, the call centre manager is confronted with the problem of finding ways to deal with the high percentage of staff absenteeism and turnover in the call centre environment as a result of the workload and stress experienced by call centre employees (Bagnara 2000 cited in Carrim & Coetzee, 2006; Townsend 2005 cited in Carrim & Coetzee, 2006). Due to the adverse effects of stress, coping strategies have to be incorporated into one's repertoire; and becoming aware of the ways in which stress levels can be decreased is beneficial, as this leads to a higher quality of life (Ross & Altamer, 1994).

Call centre employees also suffer from burnout as a result of ongoing stresses at work, hence a discussion of burnout is introduced in the next section.



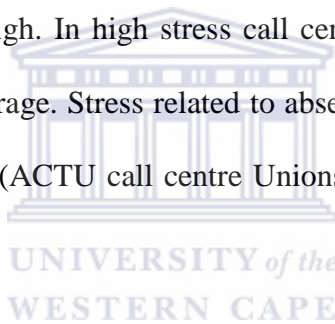
2.5 BURNOUT

2.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Burnout is a metaphor that is commonly used to describe a state of mental exhaustion (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998 cited in Storm & Rothmann, 2003). Burnout however, first emerged as a social problem not as a scholarly construct. During the pioneering phase the initial concept of burnout was shaped by pragmatic rather than academic concerns, the work was exploratory, and the goal was to articulate the burnout phenomenon (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993 cited in Storm & Rothmann, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001 cited in Storm & Rothmann, 2003).

In the second empirical phase, burnout research became more systematic and quantitative in nature. Larger study samples were used and the focus shifted to the assessment of burnout, and questionnaire and survey methodology (Maslach et al., 2001 cited in Storm & Rothmann, 2003) was used in the studies undertaken (Storm & Rothmann, 2003).

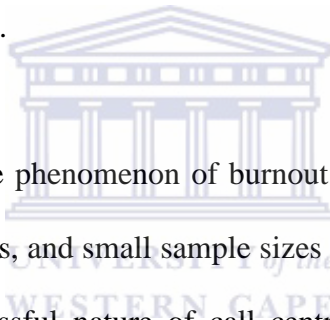
According to Lee and Ashforth (1996 cited in Dollard et al., 2003), Job satisfaction and burnout also represent important sources of employee absenteeism and turnover. Indeed, in certain service jobs such as call centre jobs (Grandey, Dicker, & Sin, 2002 in Dollard et al., 2003: Isic, Dormann, & Zapf, 1999 in Dollard et al., 2003) absenteeism and turnover rates are extremely high. In high stress call centres, turnover is reported to be almost double the industry average. Stress related to absenteeism is estimated to cost the industry \$7.5 million per year (ACTU call centre Unions Group, 2001 in Dollard et al., 2003).



Furthermore, the concept of burnout, which was initially closely linked to the service professions (that is where individuals do “people” work of some kind), has now been extended to all other professions and occupational groups. Statistics relating to police officers’ continuous exposure to violence, early retirement patterns (as a result of stress-related psychological disorders and for medical reasons), as well as high suicide rates in the SAPS, all strongly indicate that many police officers experience their working conditions as both highly stressful and traumatic (Kopel & Friedman, 1999). Burnout is regarded as an occupational hazard, particularly in the “helping professions” and in human service organisations (Maslach et al., 2001 cited in Milner, Fisher & Latif, 2007).

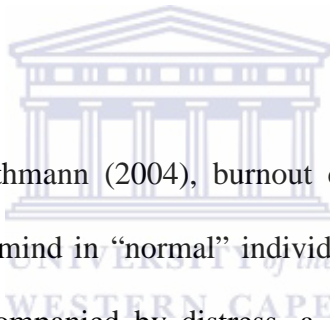
In other words, burnout has been identified as being particularly prevalent in work environments where contacts with other people constitute a significant part of the job task making burnout a risk factor in call centres (Milner, Fisher & Latif, 2007).

There has been some previous research in the area of burnout amongst call centre staff. Grandey et al. (2004 cited in Milner et al., 2007) examined the impact of customer verbal aggression on burnout in a sample of 198 call centre employees. They found that both the frequency and stress appraisal of customer aggression were positively related to burnout. However, in this study burnout was assessed only through the dimension of emotional exhaustion (Milner et al., 2007).



To date, local research into the phenomenon of burnout has been characterised by poor design, crude statistical analyses, and small sample sizes (Rothmann, 2002 cited in Storm & Rothmann, 2003). The stressful nature of call centre work and its contribution to burnout has been corroborated by other research. The service job in call centres is seen as one of the ten most stressful jobs in today's economy (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009). Deery et al. (2004 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009) found that the levels of job stress among call centre staff were high, with two-thirds of the sample reporting a degree of stress. A high level of stress and emotional exhaustion was also reported for call centre staff in Australia (Deery, Iverson & Walsh, 2002 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009). Deery et al. (2002 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009) found high levels of stress in call centres, with 80% of the employees requesting training in stress management.

Although burnout is mainly psychological in nature, the prevalence of physical symptoms is not uncommon. More specifically, burnout affects the individual on a cognitive, affective, physical and behavioural level as a result of a general breakdown in defences against prolonged job-stress (Brill, 1984 cited in Naude' & Rothmann, 2004). This breakdown occurs gradually and often remains unnoticed for a long time, perpetuated by ineffective coping strategies and frustrated intentions brought about by the subjective experience of work-reality. The gradual depletion of emotional resources results in a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation and the development of dysfunctional behaviours and attitudes at work (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998 cited in Naude' & Rothmann, 2004).



According to Naude' and Rothmann (2004), burnout can be defined as a persistent, negative work-related state of mind in “normal” individuals, primarily characterised by emotional exhaustion and accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation, and the development of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours at work.

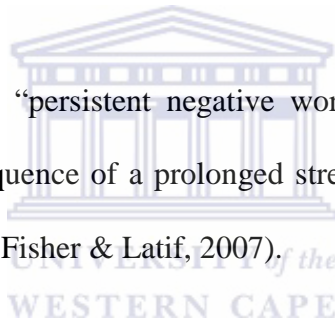
Research by Holdsworth and Cartwright (2003 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009) has shown that customer service representatives found all aspects of their job more stressful than the general working population. Examining the effect of emotional labour on emotional exhaustion in call centres revealed that call centre workers experienced a moderate level of emotional exhaustion (Lewig & Dollard, 2003 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009). In a similar vein, Singh and Goolsby (1994 cited in Visser &

Rothmann, 2009) also noted that employees working in call centres are highly prone to burnout, more so than in any other work environment (Visser & Rothmann, 2009).

2.5.2 DEFINITION OF BURNOUT

According to Maslach (1982); Maslach and Jackson (1981 cited in Dollard et al., 2003), burnout results from chronic exposure to specific conditions (that is, the social interaction between human service providers and their recipients) among people-workers. Burnout is thought “to represent a unique response to frequent and intense client-patient interactions” (Lee & Ashforth, 1996, p. 123 cited in Dollard et al., 2003).

Burnout may be defined as a “persistent negative work related state of mind which develops gradually as a consequence of a prolonged stress situation at work” (Ahola et al., 2006, p. 11 cited in Milner, Fisher & Latif, 2007).

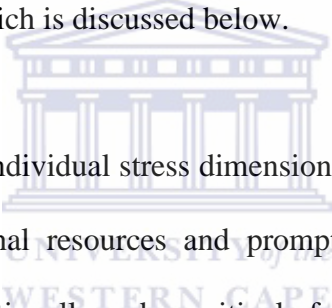


Burnout can be described as a specific type of job stress which influences job-related affective well-being (Schaufeli & Buunk, 2002 cited in Naude' & Rothmann, 2004).

Burnout is a reaction to chronic occupational stress characterized by emotional exhaustion (that is, the draining of emotional resources), cynicism (that is, a negative, callous, and cynical attitude towards ones job) and lack of professional efficacy (that is, the tendency to evaluate ones work negatively) (Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker & Lloret, 2005).

Burnout, a negative work-related psychological state that is primarily characterized by mental exhaustion, has been intensively studied during the past 25 years (Schaufeli & Buunk, in press cited in Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005). Although burnout has been shown to be potentially very costly in the helping professions, such as nursing, education, and social work, little work has been done thus far to establish its generalizability to industry (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993).

Conceptually, burnout consists of three separate but interrelated constructs, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment (Visser & Rothmann, 2009) each of which is discussed below.

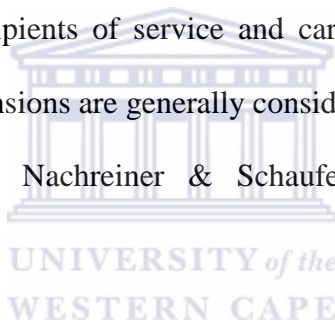


a) *Emotional exhaustion*: The individual stress dimension of burnout, refers to feelings of depleted physical and emotional resources and prompts actions in the individual to distance himself or herself emotionally and cognitively from his/her work, presumably as a way to cope with work overload (Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005). It refers to feelings of strain, fatigue, helplessness and depression (Schaufeli et al., 1993 cited in Milner, Fisher & Latif, 2007).

Emotional exhaustion is thought to be the most important factor in burnout and is usually the first reaction to set in. It refers to feelings of emotional depletion and extreme tiredness in which the individual does not have the resources to cope with the emotional demands of the work (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009; Schutte, Toppinen,

Kalimo & Schaufeli, 2000 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009). Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009) identified exhaustion as a core indicator of burnout. Chronic exhaustion can lead people to distance themselves emotionally and cognitively from their work, so that they are less involved with or responsive to the needs of other people or the demands of the task (Maslach, 1998 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009).

b) *Depersonalization*: The interpersonal context dimension is represented by *Depersonalization*, which entails negative, callous and cynical attitudes or excessively detached responses to the recipients of service and care, reducing the recipient to an impersonal object. These dimensions are generally considered to be the core symptoms of burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli 2001 cited in Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005).



Depersonalisation, more recently termed cynicism (Ahola et al., 2006 cited in Milner et al., 2007) comprises an uncaring and distant approach to work as well as a lack of enthusiasm for work and a detachment from involvement with others resulting in coldness and disregard for others' feelings (Milner et al., 2007).

c) *Lack of personal accomplishment*: The third dimension, Lack of personal accomplishment (Demerouti et al., 2001 cited in Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005), represents the self-evaluation dimension of burnout and refers to feelings of insufficiency (Schaufeli & Buunk 1996 cited in Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005),

incompetence and lack of achievement, as well as feelings of unproductiveness (Maslach et al., 2001 cited in Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005).

Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a diminished sense of competence and accomplishment in one's work and a general sense of inadequacy especially in the work setting (Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005).

2.5.3 JOB DEMANDS-RESOURCES MODEL (JD-R)

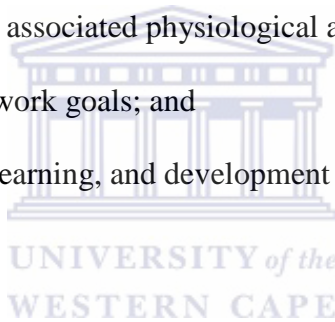
The JD-R model is a heuristic model that specifies how health impairment and motivation or involvement in any organisation may be produced by two specific sets of working conditions. The first set concerns job demands that represent characteristics of the job that potentially evoke strain, in cases where they exceed the employee's adaptive capability. More specifically, job demands refer to those physical, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (that is, cognitive or emotional) effort on the part of the employee and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (for example, exhaustion) (Hockey, 1997 cited in Bakker et al., 2003).

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 cited in Bakker et al., 2003). Karasek's (1979 cited in Bakker et al., 2003) influential demands control model uses a rather restricted definition of job demands that are mainly quantitative in nature, such as workload and

time pressure. The JD –R Model expands this view by proposing that several demanding characteristics of the working environment, including emotional demands, problems with the work equipment (that is, computers) or changes in the task, may lead to the impairment of health and consequently to absenteeism (Bakker et al., 2003).

The second set of working conditions 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 (Bakker et al., 2003):

- (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs;
- (2) are functional in achieving work goals; and
- (3) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hacker, 1998).



Hence resources are not only necessary to deal with job demands, but they also are important in their own right (Elsass & Veiga, 1997 Bakker et al., 2003; Ganster & Fussilier, 1989 Bakker et al., 2003; Hobfoll, 2001 Bakker et al., 2003; Terry & Jimmieson, 1999 Bakker et al., 2003).

Job resources has been recognised by Kahn (1990 cited in Bakker et al., 2003) as characteristics of work situations that shape the degree to which people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance. In a similar vein, Hackman and Oldham (1980 cited in Bakker et al., 2003) refer to specific

job characteristics with motivational potential. Such job characteristics foster so-called critical psychological states (for example, meaningfulness), which in their turn drive people's attitudes and behaviours. Examples of job resources are time control, performance feedback, a supportive leader, and trusting relationships with colleagues (Bakker et al., 2003).

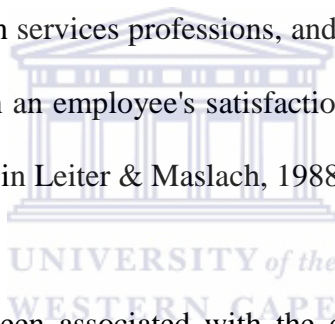
In conclusion, according to the JD –R Model, two sets of working conditions may each evoke a different process. Firstly, badly designed jobs or high job demands (for example, work overload, emotional demands) may exhaust employees' mental and physical resources and may therefore lead to the depletion of energy (that is, a state of exhaustion) and to health problems. Secondly, 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 (Bakker et al., 2003).

2.5.4 STUDIES RELATED TO CAUSES OF BURNOUT

Virtually all discussions of burnout have proposed that it is a product of both personal and environmental factors, and various studies have looked at one or both of these categories. However, the bulk of the research evidence suggests that environmental factors, particularly characteristics of the work setting, are more strongly related to burnout than personal factors such as demographic and personality variables (Leiter & Maslach, 1988).

Thus, for example, burnout has been correlated with a greater percentage of time in direct care of clients (Lewiston, Conley & Blessing-Moore, 1981; Maslach & Jackson, 1982), more difficult client problems (Meadow, 1981; Pines & Maslach, 1978), caseload (Maslach & Jackson, 1984b; Maslach & Pines, 1977), and a low degree of peer support (Burke et al., 1984; Jackson, Schwab & Schuler, 1986; Maslach & Jackson, 1982). In some cases, interactions with co-workers have been cited as the most important sources of job stress and burnout (Gaines & Jermier, 1983; Leiter & Maslach, 1986).

These findings suggest that contact with people can be a major source of distress, frustration, or conflict in human services professions, and that such a negative experience can be an important element in an employee's satisfaction with the job and commitment to continue working in it (cited in Leiter & Maslach, 1988).



Many different factors have been associated with the development of burnout in call centres. Some of the key factors noted by researchers in this terrain are work overload; pressure from management to maximise client throughput which is linked to contradictory demands from management; tenure; repetitive nature of the work; lack of task variety; lack of supervisor and co-worker support; lack of training to deal with job requirements; customer service representatives who perceive that customers are becoming more difficult to satisfy; tightly scripted telephone conversations; emotionally exhausting labour; continuous monitoring of performance; perceived lack of job and promotion opportunities; number of calls taken per day; pressure from management to

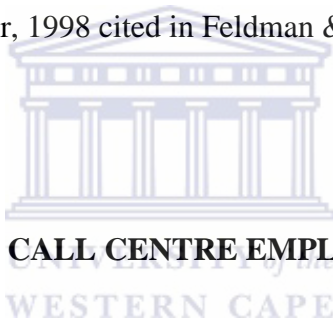
shorten wrap-up time; role conflict; role ambiguity; and lack of job control (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009).

Studies have also related burnout to factors such as work overload and high job demands (particularly in combination with lack of resources), decreasing autonomy, loss of control, effort-reward imbalance, role ambiguity or conflict, environmental uncertainty, and conflicts between staff members (Janssen et al., 1999 cited in Glasberg, Norberg & Soderberg, 2007).

There is a well-established link between heavy work demand in the form of work overload and the development of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009). According to Cordes and Dougherty (1993 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009) work overload is directly related to the development of emotional exhaustion. Some of the more common aspects of work overload involve high levels of client contact (high frequency of contact), not being able to take a break between calls, receiving calls on a continuous basis, perceived high target levels, time pressure (inability to do all the work in the time allocated per customer and brief call cycles), pressure to reduce wrap-up time, and continuous versus alternating demands (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009).

Early research regarded burnout exclusively as an organisational problem, while later work revealed it to be a consequence of multiple factors related to society, the organisation, and the individual. Although work stressors have been shown to be the major cause of burnout, a range of work and non-work pressures seems to be a necessary antecedent of burnout (Feldman & Schwartz, 2002).

Relatively few studies of the relationship of support to job satisfaction or productivity have examined or controlled for the effects of personality characteristics, despite their potential influence on both perceptions of support and reports of distress or satisfaction (Lepore, 1998 cited in Feldman & Schwartz, 2002; Lepore, Allen & Evans, 1993 cited in Feldman & Schwartz, 2002). For example, anger-related traits or negative affectivity may influence the respondent's attitudes toward relationships in general and perceptions of support from supervisors or coworkers in particular (Houston & Kelly, 1989 cited in Feldman & Schwartz, 2002) and may be associated with the exacerbation of distress responses, including the experience of burnout (Brondolo et al., 1998 cited in Feldman & Schwartz, 2002; Smith & Tziner, 1998 cited in Feldman & Schwartz, 2002).



2.5.5 BURNOUT AMONGST CALL CENTRE EMPLOYEES

Traditionally, burnout has been seen as an “individual weakness” without consideration for the role of the work environment in developing burnout (Visser & Rothmann, 2009). According to Maslach and Leiter (1997 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009), this reasoning is flawed in that it only looks at the individual and not at the individual within the working context. Research on burnout indicate that the environment within which individuals find themselves, specifically the characteristics of the work environment, are more related to burnout than to personal and or personality factors (Leiter & Maslach, 1988 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009; Maslach & Leiter, 1997 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009).

Burnout leads to a decline in mental health, which is characterised by a lowering of self-esteem, increased depression, irritability, helplessness, anxiety and sleep disturbances (Maslach & Leiter, 1997 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009; Singh, 2000 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009; Singh & Goolsby, 1994 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009).

Burnout is regarded as an occupational hazard, particularly in the “helping professions” and in human service organisations (Maslach et al., 2001 cited in Milner et al., 2007). In other words, burnout has been identified as being particularly prevalent in work environments where contacts with other people constitute a significant part of the job task making burnout a risk factor in call centres. There has been some previous research in the area of burnout amongst call centre staff. Grandey et al. (2004 cited in Milner et al., 2007) examined the impact of customer verbal aggression on burnout in a sample of 198 call centre employees. They found that both the frequency and stress appraisal of customer aggression were positively related to burnout (Milner et al., 2007).

High levels of work demand are the most critical predictor of burnout (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993 cited in Healy & Brambel, 2003; Lee & Ashforth, 1996 cited in Healy & Brambel, 2003). In particular, interactions with clients determine burnout propensity (Maslach, 1982 cited in Healy & Brambel, 2003).

2.5.6 BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS WITH RESPECT TO

2.5.6.1 Gender

Coetzee and Rothmann (2004) explained burnout by enhancing it in terms of biographical factors, such as; age, work experience and gender. Schaufeli and Enzman (1998 cited in Coetzee & Rothmann, 2004) therefore stated that women tend to score higher on emotional exhaustion, whereas men score higher on depersonalization.

Due to the paucity of studies conducted on call centre employees, reference is made to other professions. Gerdes (1988 cited in Spanenberg & Orpen-lyall, 2000) found that female managers used a social support-seeking coping strategy to a greater extent than their male counterparts may be a reflection of the female participants' higher stress levels. However, it may also reflect the general tendency among women to have a higher level of the need for affiliation and to be more concerned with achieving acceptance and good social interaction at work than men.

Spanenberg and Orpen-lyall (2000) further concluded that a failure to deal actively with the stressful situation was associated with poor adjustment, because the use of avoidant strategies meant that acceptance of the reality of the situation was delayed. Peter and Siegrist (1997 cited in Spanenberg & Orpen-lyall, 2000) studied the coping patterns of 189 male middle managers and found that those who exhibited passive coping with chronic work stress were significantly more likely to exhibit withdrawal behaviour in the form of sickness absence, while those who made use of active coping were at

significantly higher risk of exhibiting manifest hypertension. Bernin et al. (2003 cited in Kenny & Cooper, 2003) also researched gender differences in coping behaviours in a cross-national study of managers, and concluded that coping may be culturally dependent, with more differences in coping emerging across nations than across gender.

2.5.6.2 Tenure

Due to the paucity of studies conducted on call centre employees based on stress, burnout and tenure, reference is made to other professions. Teaching is often cited as having an influence on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience have been found to be more supportive of integration (Berryman, 1989; Clough and Lindsay, 1991). Trendall (1989 cited in Nagel & Brown) found that teachers with five to ten years' experience felt more highly stressed than older teachers with more experience. The majority of the teachers in this study rated teaching as either very stressful or stressful.

A study conducted by Oosthuizen and Koorsten (2007) found that firefighters with less than 2 years experience in their occupation experience more job stress due to causes originating within the work situation than the firefighters in the other categories. The results indicated a significant relation between the causes originating within the work situation and the years' experience in the firefighting occupation.

A common view with regards to length of service is that "Separation is more likely to occur in the early weeks of employment when there is little to hold the new entrant to the

working group.” (van der Merwe & Miller, 1988, p. 75). Length of service can provide a “useful measure of the development of adjustment to the work situation. It was found that labour turnover was a function of this developing relationship over time with the result that there were more leavers in the earlier stages of employment” (Nel, 1973, p. 117).

2.5.6.3 Employment type

Due to the paucity of literature conducted on call centre employees based on their employment type, reference is made to other service professions. A number of studies highlight the part-time ' less-skilled ', low wage or casual character of employment in cleaning, catering, security and a variety of retailing services, and suggest such services contribute to divisions within labour markets (Christopherson 1989 cited in Richardson & Marshall, 1996; Crang and Martin 1991 cited in Richardson & Marshall, 1996; Allen 1988 cited in Richardson & Marshall, 1996; Allen & Hendry 1994 cited in Richardson & Marshall, 1996). This same theme is reflected in related work on ' global cities ' where it is argued that de-industrialisation, and the emergence of large cities as management centres and production bases for the export of financial and business services, is increasing social disparities, primarily because of the polarised occupational structure of service industries, and the consumption behaviour of high income employees, which produces related growth of low wage employment in a range of consumer services (Sassen 1996, 1991 cited in Richardson & Marshall, 1996).

Other studies demonstrate the concentration of women in many of the service industries referred to by Sassen, where they are trapped in part-time, increasingly casualised,

peripheral parts of the labour market. Such analysis forms the basis for a critique of 'gender blind' analysis of shifts towards 'post-Fordism' (McDowell 1991 cited in Richardson & Marshall, 1996).

Little literature exists comparing full-time to part-time employees, this is somewhat surprising considering that an increasing number of persons are entering the labour force on a part-time basis. As stated by Rotchford and Roberts (1978 cited in Peters, Jackofsky and Salter, 1981), the labour force data, combined with the expectation that more persons will enter the employment sphere on a part-time basis due to economic necessity, suggest that employment status deserves more attention in the research literature than it has previously received. Based on their analysis of the limited employment status research, they speculated that the full-time versus part-time distinction, might be a meaningful one which should not be ignored in future research on employee reactions to work. As reported by Rotchford and Roberts (1978 cited in Peters, Jackofsky and Salter, 1981), aggregate labour statistics indicated that part-time employees, as compared to their full-time counterparts, tend to be primarily women, the young, and the old. The psychological literature, however, contains only three studies in which comparisons across part-time and full-time employment status groups were made (Peters, Jackofsky & Salter, 1981).

According to Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, Wecking and Moltzen (2006) an objective aspect of working conditions that should be linked with perceived motivating potentials of work is the type of employment contract. According to assumptions from social exchange theory and research on psychological contracts, employees with a full-time contract

expect and often have more positive exchange relationships with an organisation than employees with a part-time contract. Especially in organisations with a high turnover rate, having a full-time contract is also probably perceived as an indication of long-term job security and this should improve, for example, the organisational citizenship behaviour of employees (Van Dyne & Ang, 1998). Employees with full-time contracts might also be responsible for several subtasks (products), so that they experience higher task variety and task significance than employees with part time contracts.

2.5.7 SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

Burnout appears to be a response to interpersonal stressors on the job, in which an overload of contact with people results in changes in attitudes and behaviours towards them (Leiter & Maslach, 1988). Many of the work characteristics that have been linked to burnout involve contact with clients, and the call centre employees having to deal with rude clients and difficult situations on a daily basis where they have to suppress and ignore their feelings which in turn lead to emotional labour. In the next chapter emotional labour amongst call centre employees is discussed in detail.

2.6 EMOTIONAL LABOUR

2.6.1 INTRODUCTION

Emotions are a pervasive, inseparable part of the human experience and of organisational life. Emotions shape perceptions, direct behavior, and influence interactions with others (Frijda, 1986 cited Glomb & Tews, 2004). Despite their pervasiveness, research has only recently begun to examine the role of emotions and the affect in the workplace (Brief &

Weiss, 2002 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004). One area within the emotional arena receiving increased research attention is emotional labour (Glomb & Tews, 2004).

As organisations are increasingly concentrating on customer relations in an attempt to enhance their competitive position, the nature of job role requirements has changed. The expression of organisationally desired emotions has been considered as part of the work role nowadays (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987 cited in Wong & Wang, 2009). Consequently, employees are expected to engage in not only physical and intellectual labour, but also emotional labour (Chu & Murrmann, 2006 cited in Wong & Wang, 2009; Sharpe, 2005 cited in Wong & Wang, 2009; Zapf, 2002 cited in Wong & Wang, 2009).

In the past, emotions were ignored in the study of organisational behavior (Arvey, Renz, & Watson, 1998 cited in Grandey, 2000; Putnam & Mumby, 1993 cited in Grandey, 2000). The workplace was viewed as a rational environment, where emotions would get in the way of sound judgment. Thus, emotions were not even considered as explanations for workplace phenomenon (Grandey, 2000).

Few quantitative empirical studies aimed at measuring the extent to which emotional labour is performed, however, have been attempted and this may be due, not only to the relative newness of the field, but also to confusion and problems in defining the construct and components of the concept of emotional labour (cited in Mann, 1999). However, qualitative research has provided a range of evidence to suggest that emotional labour is

performed in a wide variety of work roles including flight attendants (Hochschild, 1983), supermarket cashiers (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989, 1990; Tolich, 1993), debt collectors (Sutton, 1991), nurses (James, 1989) and police detectives (Stenross & Kleinman, 1989).

Emotions in call centres are seen as a combination of Taylorism, emotional labour and surveillance (Wickham & Collins, 2004 cited in Diefendorff, Richard & Yang, 2008). Research on emotions in call centres has generally centred on Hochschild's (1983 cited in Diefendorff, Richard & Yang, 2008) concept of emotional labour, and suggests that call centre representatives (CSRs) emotions are subject to stringent emotional rules and tight managerial control (Deery et al., 2002 cited in Diefendorff, Richard & Yang, 2008).

2.6.2 DEFINITION OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR

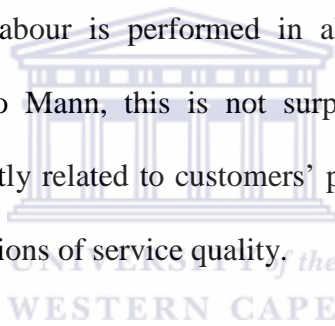
Emotional Labour is the 'effort, planning, and control needed to express organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions' (Morris & Feldman, 1996, p. 987 cited in Koskina & Keithley, 2009).

Emotional labour may involve enhancing, faking, or suppressing emotions to modify the emotional expression. Generally, emotions are managed in response to the display rules for the organisation or job (Ekman & Friesen, 1975 cited in Grandey, 2000; Goffman, 1959 cited in Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983 cited in Grandey, 2000). These rules regarding the expectations for emotional expression may be stated explicitly in selection and training materials, or known by observation of coworkers (Grandey, 2000).

Emotional labour can thus be defined as the expression of appropriate emotions, as defined by the organisation, during interaction with customers. Employees are expected to express socially desired emotions, to appear happy and eager to serve the customer, to display positive emotions and suppress negative emotions (Deery et al., 2002 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009; Maslach et al., 2001 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009).

2.6.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Ever since Hochschild's groundbreaking work, there has been a growth in interest in emotional labour (Constani & Gibbs, 2004). Mann (1997 cited in Constani & Gibbs, 2004) posits that emotional labour is performed in almost two-thirds of workplace communications. According to Mann, this is not surprising if a display of positive emotion by employees is directly related to customers' positive affect following service encounters, and to their evaluations of service quality.



Emotional labour is typified by the way roles and tasks exert overt control over emotional displays. According to Ashforth and Humphrey (1993 cited in Constani & Gibbs, 2004), Noon and Blyton (1997 cited in Constani & Gibbs, 2004), and Putnam and Mumby (1993 cited in Constani & Gibbs, 2004) emotional labour reduces the discretion exercised by the workforce in performing their jobs, whereas, empowering employees enables them to manage their emotions so as to enhance organisational effectiveness (Constani & Gibbs, 2004).

Following Hochschild's (1983 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004) original conceptualisation of emotional labour, conceptual ambiguity persists, but each conceptualisation has in common the underlying assumption that emotional labour involves managing emotions and emotional expression to be consistent with organisational or occupational "display rules," defined as expectations about appropriate emotional expression (Goffman, 1959 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004). Regardless of whether the emotion is discrepant with internal feelings, this commonality in conceptualization is accompanied by differences in theoretical approaches. Generally, theoretical treatments converge around three themes: internal states, internal processes, and external behavioral displays (Glomb & Tews, 2004) each of which will be discussed below.

2.6.3.1 INTERNAL STATE OF DISSONANCE

The first theoretical perspective emphasises the internal state of emotional dissonance, or "the state that exists when there is a discrepancy between the emotional demeanor that an individual displays because it is considered appropriate, and the emotions that are genuinely felt but that would be inappropriate to display" (Mann, 1999, p. 353 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004).

Emotional dissonance, like cognitive dissonance, creates an unstable state within the individual and may lead to negative outcomes such as estrangement between self and true feelings (Hochschild, 1983 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004), job-related stress (Adelmann, 1995 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004; Pugliesi, 1999; Wharton, 1993 cited in Glomb &

Tews, 2004), and emotional exhaustion (Morris & Feldman, 1997 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004).

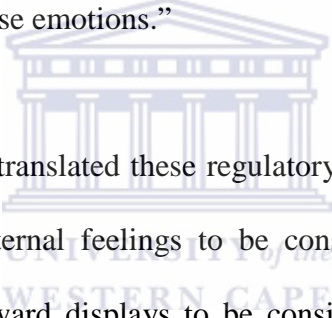
Researchers agree that dissonance is a component of emotional labour, but there is disagreement over whether it is a necessary condition. Mann (1999 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004) argued that emotional labour is present only when an individual fakes or suppresses an emotion; she excluded genuinely felt displays in her conceptualisation. Other researchers such as, Ashforth and Humphrey argued that emotional labour is performing in accordance with display rules; an employee who genuinely feels enthusiastic and appropriately expresses this is still performing work, although he or she is not experiencing dissonance. In this case there is arguably a good fit between the employee and the requirements of the position (Arvey, Renz, & Watson, 1998 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004). Given that experiencing emotions increases ones level of physiological and psychological arousal, expressing genuinely felt emotions may lead to emotional exhaustion (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004).

In order to avoid emotional dissonance and thus reduce the impact of stressful encounters on strain, so-called deep acting is recommended (Grandey, 2002 cited in Dollard et al., 2003; Hochschild, 1983 cited in Dollard et al., 2003). Through deep acting employees actively invoke thoughts, images and memories to induce a certain emotion. It also resembles a kind of faking, but in this instance it is “faking in good faith” (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987 cited in Dollard et al., 2003). It has been suggested that deep acting is less strongly related to stress reaction than surface acting (Grandey, in press cited in Dollard

et al., 2003). Deep acting may, however, deplete employees' self-regulation capabilities (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000 cited in Dollard et al., 2003).

2.6.3.2 INTERNAL PROCESS

The second theoretical perspective focuses on the internal processes involved in creating an emotional display, typically self-regulation processes (Brotheridge & Lee, 1998 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004; Grandey, 2000 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004). Gross (1998 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004, p. 275) defined emotional regulation as “the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions.”



Emotional labour research has translated these regulatory processes into notions of deep acting (attempts to modify internal feelings to be consistent with display rules) and surface acting (modifying outward displays to be consistent with display rules). Both surface acting and deep acting produce behavioral emotional display, albeit through different means. Notions of surface and deep acting are linked with those of emotional dissonance. Brotheridge and Lee (1998 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004) acknowledge that surface acting may be a manifestation of dissonance. These processes appear to be the bridge between the internal state and behavioral display; specifically, emotional dissonance drives self-regulation processes that are in turn manifested in behavioral emotional displays (Glomb & Tews, 2004).

2.6.3.3 BEHAVIORAL DISPLAY

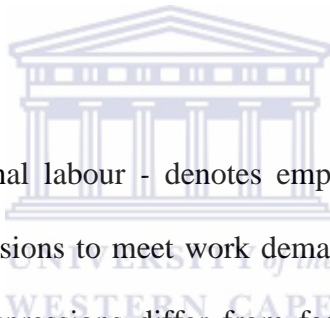
The third theoretical approach focuses on the external behavioral displays of employees. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993 cited in Glomb & Tews, 2004, p. 90) conceptualise emotional labour as, “the act of displaying appropriate emotion (that is, conforming with a display rule),” and emphasises the act or behavior rather than the internal state or process driving such behavior. They “prefer to focus on behavior rather than on the presumed emotions underlying behavior.”

Glomb and Tews (2004) argue that compliance with display rules is ultimately manifested in behavior that is observable and influences interaction (for example, service transactions). Similarly, self-regulatory processes are ultimately manifested in behavioral display. A focus on the behavioral display of emotion may be beneficial given the difficulty in tapping the unobservable dissonant states and internal processes of individuals.

External behavioral displays are given attention in all of the approaches and researchers believe the behavior of emotional expression (or the lack of it) is the most proximal component of emotional labour. In addition, researchers believe it is necessary to examine the interplay of felt emotion in conceptualising the construct. Researchers should be aware of the internal emotional states and processes in addition to behavioral displays, and attempt to integrate these components for complete understanding of emotional labour (Rubin, Tardino, Daus, & Munz, in press).

Although some degree of convergence exists regarding the definition of burnout, emotional labour has been conceptualised in two main ways:

(i) Job-focused emotional labour - denotes the level of emotional demands in an occupation. This has been measured as occupational titles such as service jobs that are thought to represent “people work” (Hochschild, 1983; Wharton, 1996), work demands such as frequency of interactions with customers (Morris & Feldman, 1996, 1997), and job expectations to express certain emotions (Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000 cited in Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Wharton & Erickson, 1995 cited in Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).



(ii) Employee-focused emotional labour - denotes employee process or experience of managing emotions and expressions to meet work demands. This has been measured as emotional dissonance when expressions differ from feelings (Abraham, 1998 cited in Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Morris & Feldman, 1997 cited in Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002) and emotion regulation is when one attempts to modify expressions to meet work demands (Brotheridge, 1998 cited in Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2000 cited in Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 1983 cited in Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Pugliesi, 1999 cited in Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

Hochschild (1983 cited in Koskina & Keithley, 2009) distinguishes between two ways that employees may perform emotional labour:

- through surface acting - where one regulates the emotional expressions, and

- through deep acting - where one consciously modifies feelings in order to express the desired emotion. According to Dollard et al. (2003), although several strategies and techniques for deep acting exist, it is believed that the worker's ability to separate personal emotions from the inherent demands of the job, a kind of role separation, represents one of the best strategies to counteract emotional dissonance and other threats of customer related social stressors.

Guerrier and Abid (2003 cited in Koskina & Keithley, 2009) address this issue by considering the extent to which front line workers are authentic in their work. In their study, they identified tour reps who engaged in surface acting as surface in authenticities and reps who were able to buy into a lifestyle that reflected their authentic selves. Their study findings suggested that the ability of employees to express their authentic selves through work reduces the negative consequences of emotional labour (Koskina & Keithley, 2009).

2.6.4 EMOTION WORK

Emotion work refers to the frequency of having to display (usually positive) emotions that are not in line with genuinely felt ones (usually neutral or negative emotions). For instance, smiling at a difficult customer may create emotional dissonance. In a recent study of call centre workers, results confirmed that emotional dissonance was more important than other forms of emotional labour in accounting for variance in emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction (Lewig & Dollard, 2003 cited in Dollard et al., 2003).

After individuals experience an emotion, they may attempt to change their emotional displays using response modulation. Response modulation is comprised of two distinct, but related strategies: faking unfeared emotions and concealing feared emotions. For example, an employee who is angry at a customer may express no emotion so as to conceal what is feared. Alternatively, an employee who is affectively neutral may simulate a smile so as to appear enthusiastic. Individuals may use both strategies together (positive and negative emotions), such as when an employee is depressed but covers it with a smile in front of customers (Grandey & Brauburger, 2002 cited in Diefendorff, Richard & Yang, 2008).

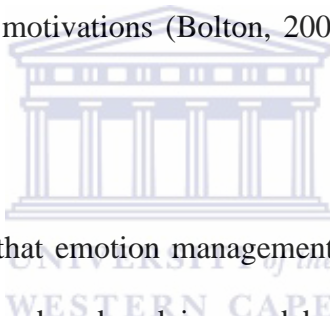
Morris and Feldman (1996 cited in Dollard et al., 2003, p. 987) defined emotion work as the “effort, planning and control needed to express organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions”. One aspect of emotion work is the requirement to express positive and (sometimes) negative emotions toward customers (Morris & Feldman, 1996 cited in Dollard et al., 2003). Strazdins (2000 cited in Dollard et al., 2003) proposes emotional work to consist of three main dimensions:

- (a) companionship (positive interaction);
- (b) help; and
- (c) assistance in self-regulation of feelings;

2.6.5 EMOTION MANAGEMENT

The sociological concept of emotion work is very similar to the concept of emotion regulation used by social psychologists (Walden & Smith, 1997 cited in Pugliesi, 1999). Both emotion work and emotion regulation refers to efforts to create a normative emotional state, mask feelings in order to present a certain emotional state, and minimize,

exaggerate, or otherwise control the expression of emotional states. Emotion management is accomplished in the context of prevailing "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1979 cited in Pugliesi, 1999), which prescribe emotional states, and "display rules," which guide the expression of emotion (Ekman, Friesen, & Ellsworth, 1982 cited in Pugliesi, 1999). The concept of bounded emotionality emphasises the role of social exchange amongst management and employees, Boltons' concept of philanthropic emotion management stresses the importance of social interaction amongst workers and customers. The author argues that employees are social actors, who are able to calibrate their performances of emotion management or emotion work depending upon the feeling rules of particular situations and their associated motivations (Bolton, 2005 cited in Koskina & Keithley, 2009).



Bolton further posits explains that emotion management performances do not rely only on commercial feeling rules produced and imposed by management, as Hochschild's concept of emotional labour suggests, but also on social feeling rules that offer kindness to customers. Where prescriptive organisational rules do not apply, or when they are significantly relaxed, spaces are opened up for philanthropic emotion management to be performed (Koskina & Keithley, 2009).

2.6.6 EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN THE CALL CENTRE ENVIRONMENT

Emotions in organisations have found increasing interest among academics and practitioners recently (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995 cited in Wong & Wang, 2008; Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Daus, 2002 cited in Wong & Wang, 2008; Briner, 1999 cited in

Wong & Wang, 2008). Zapf (2002 cited in Wong & Wang, 2008) concluded that emotional labour is more important in the service sector than in other sectors for several reasons. Firstly, the assessment of the quality of service is often difficult. Secondly, the service product is immediately consumed and corrections, such as giving the product back, are not possible. Thirdly, emotional labour should influence the customers' emotions, thereby, also influencing their cognitions and behaviors. Fourthly, influencing a customer's emotion may make other things easier (Wong & Wang, 2008).

The important factor playing a role in the development of burnout is the emotional dissonance component of emotional labour (Visser & Rothmann, 2009). Emotional dissonance develops when employees display positive emotions but feel quite differently within themselves. It makes them feel inauthentic (Deery et al., 2004 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009; Lewig & Dollard, 2003 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009; Zapf et al., 1999 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009). Call centre employees, and customer service representatives specifically, are more prone to burnout for they mostly perform emotional labour and occupy boundary-spanning roles in representing the organisation to the customer (Singh & Goolsby, 1994 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009).

Some researchers have argued that the prescription and supervision of workers' feelings and expressive gestures is a stressful or alienating experience. Hochschild (1983 cited in Pugliesi, 1999) contended that the false nature of feelings and expressions required from those in occupations that provide services to the public is especially deleterious to workers. As a consequence, service sector organisations have sought to specify the way

in which employees 'present themselves' to their customers. Requirements that staff display certain forms of behaviour which conform to organisationally established norms are now common in most areas of interactive service work (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996 cited in Deery et al., 2002). This has however led to particularly invasive forms of workplace control (Deery et al., 2002).

Subsequently, many researchers have focused on emotional labour in service occupations in which interpersonal emotion management is embedded in the non-personal relationships between workers and clients (Jones, 1997 cited in Pugliesi, 1999). However, Brotheridge and Grandey (2002 cited in Dollard et al., 2003) found that only the demand to hide negative emotions was related to burnout, whereas having to display positive emotions was positively related to personal accomplishment. The mere frequency of display of positive or negative emotions does not exhibit a consistent pattern of relations with employee strain variables (Zapf, 2002 cited in Dollard et al., 2003). According to Deery et al. (2002) the customer can also bring other tensions to the work environment. They may be abusive and irritating and their demands may be unreasonable. As Macdonald and Sirianni (1996, p. 17 cited in Deery et al., 2002) point out that the daily work experience for some employees are often one of a series of minor complaints assuming major proportions for the customer. In order to manage these situations and protect themselves from abuse or ill treatment, employees are often encouraged to suppress their true feelings and emotionally detach themselves from hostile or difficult customers (Frenkel et al., 1998 cited in Deery et al., 2002; Hochschild, 1979 cited in Deery et al., 2002).

Research on emotions in call centres has generally centred on Hoschild's (1983 cited in Diefendorff, Richard & Yang, 2008) concept of emotional labour, and suggests that call centre representatives (CSRs) emotions are subject to stringent emotional rules and tight managerial control (Deery et al., 2002 cited Diefendorff, Richard & Yang, 2008). According to Hoschild (1983 cited in Holman, 2003) an employee can accomplish emotional labour by surface acting or deep acting (Hoschild, 1983 cited in Holman, 2003). Central to theories of emotional labour is the idea that organisations implicitly or explicitly specify what and how emotions should be expressed (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990 cited in Holman, 2003; Sutton, 1991 cited in Holman, 2003).



2.6.7 BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS WITH RESPECT TO

2.6.7.1 Gender

Emotional labour is gendered, in the sense that there clearly exists a sexual division of emotional labour (Heller, 1980 cited in Soares, 2003). Men are generally confined to tasks that demand aggressiveness and curtness. Men frequently find themselves in jobs where they must be aggressive towards those that transgress rules, while women are more likely to accomplish tasks while restraining aggression and anger toward others. Women generally are given tasks that demand nurturing, tenderness, sensitivity, and intuition. They are supposedly afraid of things that men are not supposed to fear and are often described as compassionate, charitable, agreeable, and kind (Soares, 2003).

Public organisations have recently adopted the concept of emotional labor in studies of gender in the workforce, and they state that the skills that females bring to an organisation are many times over looked and under compensated despite the fact that the skills play a vital role in the organisation (Guy & Newman Nd cited in Meier & Wilson, 2004). Emotional labor occurs when an individual makes an effort to present emotions in a way that is desired by the organisation (Hochschild 1983; Morris & Feldman 1996 cited in Meier & Wilson, 2004).

2.6.7.2 Tenure

A study by Lewig and Dollard (2003) found that the aspect of work considered to be most stressful was having to deal with angry and abusive customers, followed by pressure to meet targets and the repetitiveness of the job. The results confirmed the centrality of emotion labour variables (dealing with angry/ aggressive customers) in the experience of stress at work, as well as in the experience of satisfaction at work (making customers feel happy). A further finding was length of service which was positively correlated with emotional exhaustion. This finding is consistent with the notion that stress increases with duration of exposure to stressors (Beehr, 1995 cited in Lewig and Dollard, 2003; Dollard, 1996 cited in Lewig and Dollard, 2003). The implication of this is that it is likely that individuals underestimate the level of distress, and the impact of emotional demands on stress of call centre workers because their length of service is shorter (possibly due to the stressful nature of the work itself and a high turnover level) (Lewig and Dollard, 2003).

Martin and Roodt (2008) found that turnover intentions had a significant relationship with the tenure as the results indicated that an inverted U-trend is encountered where turnover intentions increased initially as tenure increased, and then decreased once a peak is reached. The peak in this case was six to ten years. Jacobs (2005) and Lum et al. (1998) report similar findings. This may be due to the fact that new employees are experiencing their twilight years while at the organisation and are also naïve about the organisation as a complete whole, while those who are very experienced are attached to the organisation after investing many years of service in it. Those who were in the six to ten years category felt that they have experienced the organisation sufficiently and therefore feel a need to change.



2.6.7.3 Employment type

The rapid expansion of information technology through the Internet has meant the added burden of information overload, the accelerating pace of work, and demands for immediacy of response in 7 day–24 hour work cultures. Hours of work have also increased in many countries, which has had adverse effects on the two earner family (which is now in many countries the most common family unit). As a consequence, lack of work-life balance has moved up the agenda of work-related sources of stress in many employee surveys (Worrall & Cooper, 2001 cited in Kenny & Cooper, 2003).

According to Zeytinoglu, Denton, Davies and Plenderleith (2008), results show those individuals who are employed in casual hours are also the ones intending to leave their workplaces. As expected in casual type of employment, workers have a higher tendency

to leave their jobs when they can find better jobs. The new job can be full-time employment or even a few part-time jobs pieced together creating full-time hours, but it is clear that casual workers do not intend to stay with their organisations. It is also possible that casual workers opt for this kind of employment because they do not want full-time employment.

2.6.8 SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

Jobs in the service sector of the economy especially those involving direct contact with customers or the public, are most often cited as those most likely to involve a considerable amount of emotional labour (MacDonald & Sirianni, 1996 cited in Pugliesi, 1999; Stearns, 1988 cited in Pugliesi, 1999). As mentioned in the literature above, factors such as stress, work overload and constantly suppressing or ignoring one's emotions results in high percentage of staff absenteeism and turnover. The following section addresses intention to leave amongst call centre employees.

2.7 INTENTION TO LEAVE

2.7.1 INTRODUCTION

Turnover research has been a consistent theme in the human resources and organisational behaviour literature for over 30 years (for early reviews see Brayfield & Crockett, 1955 cited in Campion, 1991; Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell, 1957 cited in Campion, 1991; March & Simon, 1958 cited in Campion, 1991). Reviews and commentaries have frequently called for refinement of constructs and improvement of measures. For example, Mobley et al. (cited in Campion, 1991, p. 151) stated, "Although

turnover is often thought of as a 'clean' objective criterion, [there is a] need for greater attention to the criterion problem in turnover research."

While the call centre is increasingly known as a valuable resource for firms in managing customer relationships, call centre work is itself demanding, repetitive, and often stressful (Taylor & Bain, 1999 cited in Lewig & Dollard, 2003; Wallace, Eagleson, & Waldersee, 2000 cited in Lewig & Dollard, 2003) and this is reflected in high levels of turnover and absenteeism. As an example, staff turnover in the Australian call centre industry is estimated to be 18% per year, representing a cost of Australian \$330 (Information Industries Training Advisory Board, 2001 cited in Lewig & Dollard, 2003). In call centres characterized by high stress, turnover is reported to be almost double the industry average. Stress-related absenteeism is estimated to cost the industry \$A 7.5m per year (ACTU Call Centre Unions Group, 2001 cited in Lewig & Dollard, 2003). While the call centre is increasingly known as a valuable resource for firms in managing customer relationships, it has also developed a reputation as a stressful work environment (Proper, 1998 cited in Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004). Stress may be the primary culprit behind such negative organisational outcomes as high turnover and absenteeism in the call centre industry (James, 1998 cited in Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004).

Similarly O'Herron (2003) posits that within the call centre environment specifically, turnover has been identified as one of the most pressing problems in terms of scope (levels or percentages of turnover), cost and productivity. Muchinsky (1993 cited O'Herron, 2003) reports that people are spurred on to search for alternative employment

by feelings of dissatisfaction in their current job, however, the actual decision to quit is influenced by one crucial factor, namely the cost of actually resigning. The person may re-evaluate his or her decision to quit based on the costs of resigning. If the costs are too high, the person will have to re-evaluate the job but if the costs of quitting are relatively low and he or she has a better offer, this will result in the person actually quitting.

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008) suggests that behavioural intention is a good predictor of actual behaviour. Studies (such as that of Fox & Fallon, 2003; Hom & Hulin, 1981; Mobley, 1982; Mobley, Horner & Hollingsworth, 1978; Newman, 1974; Shields & Ward, 2001; Tett & Meyer, 1993) have successfully demonstrated that behavioural turnover intentions are consistently seen with moderate to strong correlations with turnover, substantiating Ajzen's notion (1991 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008) that there is considerable support for the notion that intention to quit-stay is probably the most important and immediate individual-level antecedent and predictor of turnover decisions (cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008).

Weisberg (1994) however, on the other hand, provides a somewhat different, more cost-focused perspective of labour turnover as a natural part of organisational life, involving both financial and non-financial costs resulting from experienced employees leaving voluntarily. From a managerial perspective, the call centre manager is confronted with the problem of finding ways to deal with the high percentage of staff absenteeism and turnover in the call centre environment as a result of the workload and stress experienced by call centre employees (Bagnara, 2000 cited in Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006;

Townsend, 2005 cited in Carrim et al., 2006). Factors that lead to unhappiness in call centres are the monotony and repetitiveness of the job content. This situation is aggravated by lack of opportunities for promotion and by stress which leads to high turnover rates (Worldroom Digest 2004 cited in Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006).

Past research has shown however, that call centre turnover may be reduced by giving newcomers a realistic job preview (RJP) or a job “sample” that presents an accurate picture of the position for which they are applying, including both positive and negative points. For example, a new call centre employee may be given information about difficult phone customers, loud work environments, and repetitive job duties (Mobbs, 2002).

2.7.2 DEFINITION OF INTENTIONS TO LEAVE

While absence refers to the temporary withdrawal from work, labour turnover is permanent withdrawal. Van der Merwe and Miller (1976) state withdrawal is a function of the person-work relationship, and as such is related to absence. Where absence levels are high, a corresponding high level of turnover can also be expected (Van der Merwe & Miller, 1976).

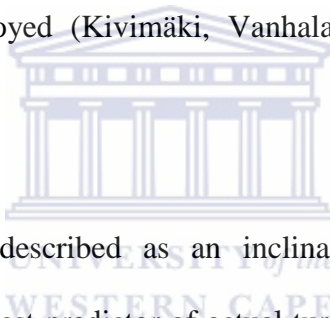
Turnover behaviour is a multistage process that includes attitudinal, decisional and behavioural components (Martin & Roodt, 2008).

Sager, Griffeth and Hom (1998 cited in Jacobs & Roodt, 2008) referred to turnover cognitions as mental decisions intervening between an individual’s attitude regarding the

job, and decision to leave or stay. According to Elangovan (2001 cited in Jacobs & Roodt, 2008), intention to leave represents an attitudinal orientation or a cognitive manifestation of the behavioural decision to leave (Jacobs & Roodt, 2008).

Job turnover is generally defined as 'voluntarily leaving the organisation' (van Breukelen, 1988 cited in Janssen, Jonge & Bakker, 1999). The psychological variable propensity to leave, or turnover intention, is closely related to turnover (Janssen et al., 1999).

Intention to leave a job refers to the intent or predisposition to leave the organisation where one is presently employed (Kivimäki, Vanhala, Pentti, Länsisalmi, Virtanen, Elovainio & Vahetera, 2007).



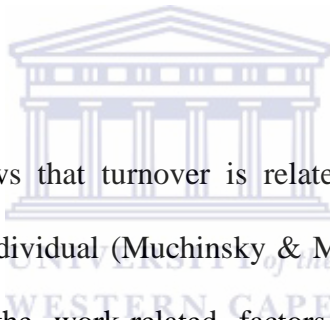
Turnover intentions can be described as an inclination to leave an organisation voluntarily and is seen as the best predictor of actual turnover. Thus, turnover intentions can be used as a reliable indicator of actual quitting (Janssen, De Jonge & Nijhuis, 2001 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009; Maertz & Campion, 2001 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009).

2.7.3 TURNOVER MODELS

Turnover models share one indelible constant, they are all attempting to describe the same behavioral process (that is, the employee turnover process). Therefore, conceptual overlap among the models is inevitable. But, the substantial conceptual diversity existing

among contemporary turnover models is proof that complete theoretical convergence is still a distant goal (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009).

The focus on turnover as individual motivated choice behaviour was evident in early reviews (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955) and discussions (March & Simon, 1958; Vroom, 1964). Although initial models examined little more than overall job satisfaction as a correlate of turnover, increasingly complex models of decision processes were developed over time. When concern about turnover measures arose in these studies, the focus was on ensuring that the turnover reflected employee choice (that is voluntary) (cited in Steel & Lounsbury, 2009).



In general, the literature shows that turnover is related to many different variables: economic, work-related and individual (Muchinsky & Morrow 1980 cited in Janssen et al., 1999). With regard to the work-related factors, it seems that conditions of employment are particularly important correlates of turnover and propensity to leave (Janssen et al., 1999). Rosse and Miller (1984 cited in Janssen et al., 1999) found that, in particular, lack of satisfaction with job aspects like salary, career opportunities and work content were associated with turnover intention (Janssen et al., 1999).

The, initial concern with the measurement of turnover was to ensure that the dependent variable was appropriate when the application of motivational models was studied. For example, if some of this turnover reflected the organisation's decision that it no longer wanted or needed the individual (for example, termination for poor performance or layoff

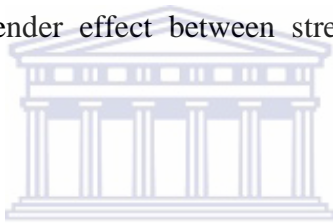
for reduction in force), then it would be unreasonable to expect that motivational models would predict this involuntary turnover. Various research (such as, Campion & Mitchell, 1986; MacKinney & Wollins, 1959; Mc Evoy & Cascio, 1987; Stumpf & Dawley, 1981; Wild, 1970) in which both voluntary and involuntary turnover were explicitly examined, have found them differentially predictable (Campion, 1991).

Turnover models often give less attention to impetus-producing triggering agencies than to linking or intervening mechanisms (for example, job satisfaction, intentions to search). Nevertheless, some models have attempted to address the former issue, for example, models developed by Mobley et al. (1979 cited in Steel & Lounsbury, 2009), Hulin, Roznowski and Hachiya (1985 cited in Steel & Lounsbury, 2009) and Price and Mueller (1986 cited in Steel & Lounsbury, 2009) identify process energizing mechanisms. These models describe a host of organisational and contextual factors capable of triggering the turnover process. Systematic research designed to isolate the most important triggering mechanisms would pave the way for more productive theoretical analysis of these understudied issues (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009).

Steel et al. (2002 cited in Steel & Lounsbury, 2009) noted that different sets of motives may become salient as the acts of staying (for example, friendships with coworkers) and leaving (for example, career advancement) are separately contemplated. The researchers posit that staying and leaving are different kinds of decisions, and they may be the products of overlapping, but not necessarily duplicate, antecedent agencies (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009).

2.7.4 FINDINGS OF TURNOVER / INTENTION TO LEAVE WITHIN THE CALL CENTRE

Research findings by Kemery et al. (1985 cited in Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004) indicate that there appears to be an indirect but negative relationship between stress and turnover and/or absenteeism. In this case, stress affects an employee's voluntary choice to leave employment through its influence of job satisfaction Matteson and Ivancevich (1987 cited in Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004) found that stress causes half of all absenteeism and one-fourth of all voluntary turnover. This phenomenon was mirrored in a study of food service workers conducted by Babin and Boles (1998 cited in Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004). They found a strong gender effect between stress and negative job outcomes (Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004).



Similar to call centre employees, physicians also deal with customers/patients on a daily basis. Williams et al. (2001 cited in Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004) found in their study that increased stress among physicians resulted in several forms of withdrawal. The physicians reported higher turnover intentions and an increased likelihood to reduce work hours or withdraw from direct patient care. Thus, it appears that stress first manifests itself as an increase in job dissatisfaction, which may lead to an increase in quitting intent (or an increase in absenteeism) (Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004).

In a study done by Gallagher (2004 cited in Gordi, 2006) turnover rates as high as 40% were reached for CCRs in insurance organisations in America. Even in high quality call centres, turnover remains rather high according to Kleemann and Matuschek (2002 cited

in Gordi, 2006). Management Today (1999 cited in Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004) reported an absenteeism rate of 5% for call centres (as compared to a national average of 3.5%). James (1998 cited in Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004) estimated the cost of turnover in call centres at US\$10,000 per employee. Stuller (1999) reported an average turnover rate of over 30% for call centres. While stress remains a ubiquitous aspect of organisational life, optimism may reduce the intensity of stress internalized by employees (Scheier and Carver, 1985 cited in Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004).

Contrary to the above studies, the results of a study conducted in a call centre by Grebner, Semmer, Lo Faso, Gut, Kälin and Elfering, (2003) shows that interestingly, intention to quit is even lower among call employees. The researchers attribute this finding due to the fact that the comparison sample is younger, and therefore might anticipate changes more than would be true for an older sample. According to Baumgartner et al. (2002) these results seems supporting given the rather high turnover rates sometimes reported for call employees. It could also be that call centre employees plan their changes less actively but rather react more spontaneously to opportunities that arise, which might imply that their threshold to quit their job is lower, and thus would explain why a low mean intention to quit might still be associated with a rather high actual turnover rate. Moreover, this seems plausible because call employees did not invest much in their current job in terms of training and if they quit their job they do not lose much in terms of job demands and resources.

Although intention to leave does not necessarily mean actual employee turnover, intention has been found to be a strong predictor of quitting a job. High intention to leave may also have indirect negative influences at work in the form of withdrawal, which is declining participation in a job. Withdrawal has been found to manifest itself as lateness, absenteeism, avoidance behaviour, and lowered performance (Kivimäki, 2007).

Boredom is sometimes also induced by unnecessary waiting times that result from mismanaged call distribution or unexpected low call volumes. Moreover, requirements for employees to be innovative, proactive, or forward thinking are often low for these types of tasks and this typically also yields lower work motivation and health problems. As several other common stressors (example, working in shifts, inconvenient postures due to computer work, high noise levels in large offices) are also present in call centre work, it can be concluded that the work of employees is neither simple nor undemanding. In support of this, turnover rates in call centres as a result are very high. In a study of 14 call centres in Switzerland, for example, Baumgartner et al. (2002 cited in Wegge et al., 2006) reported an average turnover rate of 21% per annum (Wegge et al., 2006).

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991 cited in Jacobs & Roodt, 2008), suggested that behavioural intention is a good predictor of actual behaviour. It has been successfully demonstrated in previous studies that behavioural intention to leave is consistently correlated with turnover (Fox & Fallon, 2003). There is considerable support for the notion that intention to leave is probably the most important and immediate antecedent of turnover decisions (Fox & Fallon, 2003 cited in Jacobs & Roodt, 2008; Slate & Vogel,

1997 cited in Jacobs & Roodt, 2008). Furthermore, many studies have been based on the belief that turnover is an individual choice behavioural pattern based on the conceptualisation that it is a psychological response (Lum, Kervin, Clark, Reid & Sirola, 1998; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand & Meglino, 1979 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008).

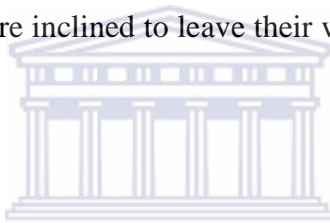
2.7.5 THEORY AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TURNOVER INTENTION

The theory on turnover shows that turnover intention is the best predictor of whether an employee will leave the organisation. The theory predicts that a number of factors from people's work environments and personal lives affect their turnover intention. Empirical testing of the turnover intention theory shows that employment conditions such as heavy workload, lack of support from organisational leaders and co-workers, and poor working conditions are some of the factors affecting turnover intention. Studies on Canadian home care workers show the same factors contributing to turnover and turnover intention (Zeytinoglu, Denton, Davies & Plenderleith, 2009).

Regardless of the type of organisation, voluntary turnover is disruptive and harmful to the organisation. It is also costly, both directly and indirectly (Cascio, 1991 cited in Lambert, 2006). Turnover is particularly costly for correctional organisations as they rely heavily on the human factor (Stohr et al., 1992 cited in Lambert, 2006). Recruitment, testing, selection, and training of new staff are expensive (Kiebusch, Price, & Theis, 2003 cited in Lambert, 2006). Furthermore, turnover intent is the cognitive process of thinking, planning, and desiring to leave a job (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979 cited in Lambert, 2006). It is generally agreed in the turnover literature that turnover intent is the

final cognitive step in the decision making process of voluntary turnover, and it has consistently been linked to voluntary turnover (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Steel & Ovalle, 1984) (cited in Lambert, 2006). It is easier to measure turnover intent than voluntary turnover because administrative records may be unavailable, incomplete, or inaccurate (Mitchell et al., 2000 cited in Lambert, 2006).

Empirical testing of turnover theory shows that turnover decision and the intention to leave can also be affected by a number of individual characteristics such as occupation, education, age, tenure, membership in a union, and income. Those in occupations that are in demand, higher educated, younger workers, those with lower workplace tenure, and those with low earnings are more inclined to leave their workplaces (Zeytinoglu, Denton, Davies & Plenderleith, 2009).



Some researchers postulate that the notion of commitment to either job or profession is a more useful concept than turnover cognitions. However, research indicates that turnover cognitions have a distinct conceptual base and significant explanatory power (Carbery, Garavan, O'Brien & McDonnell, 2003 cited in Jacobs & Roodt, 2008). Lambert, Hogan and Barton (2001 cited in Jacobs & Roodt, 2008) suggest that more attention should be given to the direct and indirect influences of variables on intention to leave as opposed to the actual act of turnover. From the employer's point of view, intention to leave may be a more important variable than the actual act of turnover (Jacobs & Roodt, 2008).

2.7.6 LINK BETWEEN STRESS, BURNOUT, EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND INTENTION TO LEAVE

It is important to understand the predictors of turnover to enable the management of a call centre to manage the impact on the organisation (Visser & Rothman, 2009). The average turnover in call centres is high. It has been reported that call centres in the UK face a turnover rate of 49% or more, which means that nearly half of their staff resign in the course of a year (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009). A similar finding was made by Deery et al. (2004), namely that the annual turnover rate in call centres in the UK was in the region of 30%.

Turnover rates for call centres are therefore reported to be above average in comparison with equivalent office-type working environments (Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2003). Call centre work has been highly associated with stress and burnout, with resultant high levels of staff turnover (Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2003 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009).

More significantly, in the call centre the employees are usually instructed to be friendly, enthusiastic, polite, and helpful to customers even if customers are rude (which is not a rare event, and this induces further demands with respect to the volitional presentation of emotions in opposition to those being actually felt, which is referred to as emotional dissonance. As many call centres use monitoring procedures such as test calls and recording of calls (Holman, 2002; Holman, Chissick, & Totterdell, 2002 cited in Wegge

et al., 2006), violations of this norm will therefore be easily detected (Wegge et al., 2006).

Employees also have very little autonomy or control over their work because they are not allowed to deviate from a predetermined message in order to meet customer demands. Having to use the same communication script about hundred times a day leads to feelings of monotony and boredom (Wieland & Timm, 2004 cited in Wegge et al., 2006) that might accumulate over the course of the week (Richter, 2004 cited in Wegge et al., 2006). Concern has been expressed about the possible negative effects of this form of work on the psychological well-being of employees. Hochschild (1979, 1983) has claimed that job-related burnout is one of the most likely outcomes of the performance of emotional labour. She believed that staffs who were employed in jobs with sustained customer contact and few opportunities to vary the nature of their displayed feelings risked high levels of stress (Wegge et al., 2006).

Morris and Feldman (1997) also considered that frequent interpersonal interactions with clients of an emotionally intense nature could be expected to lead to emotional exhaustion. However, there have been very few quantitative attempts to examine the socio-psychological effects of emotional labour on frontline service workers.

As mentioned in the literature above and earlier, emotional exhaustion was found to be a strong predictor of both organisational commitment and turnover intentions. When individuals experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion, they are more likely to

leave their jobs, and positive correlations have also been found between emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions (Visser & Rothman, 2009).

Burnout has been linked to negative organisational outcomes such as low job satisfaction, low morale, and high levels of absenteeism and turnover. On the individual level, the emotional consequences of burnout are even more serious (Visser & Rothman, 2009). Research over the past two decades have shown that burnout has detrimental effects (including depression, a sense of failure, fatigue, and loss of motivation), not only on individuals but also on organisations. For the organisation, these detrimental effects include absenteeism, high staff turnover rates and decreased productivity (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998 cited in Storm & Rothmann, 2003).

Several studies reviewed by Burke and Richardsen (2001 cited in Visser & Rothman, 2009) have found that turnover intention was significantly related to burnout (Visser & Rothman, 2009). In other studies, Kleemann and Matuschek (2002) also concluded that high turnover in call centres can be attributed to feelings of burnout after two to three years in the same job. In 1999 turnover ranged between 15% and 50% per year in German call centres ((Kleemann & Matuschek, 2002, p. 3). Studies by Kleemann and Matuschek (2002) show that the high turnover rate can be attributed to several reasons: Firstly, university students working in call centres leave after a few years. Secondly, call centre employees with a purely instrumental work orientation leave seeking better career prospects. Thirdly, the inevitability of burnout after two years in the same job irrespective

of the humanization efforts (for example, job rotation, and job enrichment) made by management (Kleemann & Matuschek, 2002).

2.8 CONCLUSION

There are numerous studies that have examined the impact of occupational stress on workers in a variety of countries and cultures (Feldman & Thomas, 1992 cited in Mack, Nelson & Quick, 2008). Clearly, this is a topic that concerns companies, and their employees, on a global basis (Mack, Nelson & Quick, 2008).

As mentioned, stress can be either a positive or a negative all depending on the individual. Stress has the potential in turning into distress or strain due to a variety of reasons as mentioned in the literature review and it is this manifestation of stress that is individually and organisationally damaging. Medically there is no cure for stress, it is inevitable for call centre employees to suffer from stress due to their work load, time constraints within the call centre and several other factors as discussed. However, if stress is not dealt with it can lead to an increase in the turnover rate (intentions to leave) within the call centre environment.

Very little research, however, has been conducted with respect to important factors that might reduce strain and turnover in call centres. However, the factors that make call centre work stressful are still under extensive investigation (Wegge et al., 2006).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the ensuing chapter the research design undertaken, the population sample, measuring instruments and procedure for data gathering as well as the statistical techniques employed are discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study a quantitative methodology was adopted. In the social sciences, quantitative research refers to the systematic empirical investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to phenomena. The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

For this study non-probability sampling in the form of a convenience sample was used. With convenience sampling, the selection of units from the population is based on easy availability and/ or accessibility. The consequence for ease of sample attention is the representativeness of the sample. The major disadvantage of this technique however, is that the researcher has no idea how representative the information collected about the sample is to the population as a whole (Green, 2005).

According to Babbie & Mouton (2007) surveys may be used for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory purposes. They are chiefly used in studies that have individual people as the units of analysis. Although this method can be used for other units of analysis, such as groups or interactions, some individual persons must serve as respondents or informants. Survey research involves collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly. Careful probability sampling provides a group of respondents whose characteristics may be taken to reflect those of the larger population, and carefully constructed standardized questionnaires provide data in the same form from all respondents.

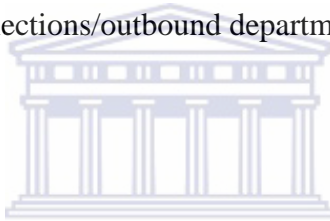
The method used in this study is a questionnaire, which is a preformulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives. This method is also convenient and less time consuming (Sekaran, 2003). The disadvantages are that this sample design is not generalizable at all, because it is based at only one call centre in South Africa (Sekaran, 2001).

The advantages of this method are as follows: a) it is relatively cheap and quick to complete, b) it can be kept anonymous (if respondents are reluctant to report controversial or deviant attitudes or behaviour), and c) it can be more effective for sensitive issues. Some disadvantages of this method include: a) it is only an option where the specific population under study is literate, b) it may produce more incomplete questionnaires (respondents may skip some questions), c) the researcher's lack of opportunity for clarifying questions and probing for more information, d) the researcher's

lack of observation with regard to how respondents react towards questions and the research setting (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

3.2.1 POPULATION

A population can be defined as the entire group of persons or sets of objects and events the researcher wants to study; a population contains all the variables of interest to the research (Collins, du Plooy, Grobbelaar, Puttergill, Terre Blanche, van Eeden, van Rensburg & Wigston, 2000). Population elements are selected on the basis of their availability (Green, 2005). The population for this study comprised of 250 call centre employees employed in the collections/outbound department within the call centre.



3.2.2 SAMPLE

A sample can be defined as items selected at random from a population and used to test the hypothesis about the population (Breakwell, 2006). Two hundred and ten call centre employees were invited to participate in the study. A hundred and five questionnaires were distributed to the call centre employees working in the day shift, and a hundred and five questionnaires were distributed to the call centre employees working in the night shift.

However, a total of one hundred and sixty-four questionnaires were returned completed, of which eighty-six questionnaires were from the day shift department, and seventy-eight questionnaires were from the night shift department. Twenty seven questionnaires were returned incomplete and nineteen questionnaires were not completed. The questionnaires

were easily administered and retrieved from the call centre employees. According to Sekaran (2003) a response rate of thirty percent (30%) is considered acceptable for most research purposes.

3.2.3 PROCEDURE

After meetings with the manager and team leaders, it was agreed upon that all the (that is, 210) call centre employees working in the collections/ inbound department would be invited to participate in the research. All the team managers were briefed about the process by the researcher, and then each team manager was asked to issue the invite to the respective teams in their team meetings.

The questionnaires were distributed in two sessions on the same day during the call centre employees' staff meetings. The purpose for completing the research questionnaires and the procedure were explained to the employees by the researcher. Who was also present at the sessions to address any questions that may arise.

Furthermore, participants were also briefed that participation was voluntary and that all information will be kept confidential and results will be used for the intended research only. Respondents were also assured of their anonymity as no personal information that could identify participants were needed to be written on the questionnaire. Permission was granted for participants to complete the questionnaires during business hours. Each call centre agent completed their questionnaire at their own desks, to ensure privacy. On completion, all questionnaires were returned to the researcher.

3.3 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

Three measuring instruments were used to gather the data, namely, the Experience of Work Life Circumstances Questionnaire (WLCQ) to measure stress, Maslach Burnout Inventory Questionnaire (MBI) to measure burnout, Emotional Labour Scale to measure emotional labour and Turnover Intention Questionnaire to measure call centre employees intention to leave the call centre.

3.3.1 BIOGRAPHICAL/DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

A self developed questionnaire was used to obtain biographical information. Questions relating to gender, age, designated group, marital status, if they have children, qualification, tenure, work shift, and employment contract were included.

3.3.2 THE EXPERIENCE OF WORK AND LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES QUESTIONNAIRE (WLCQ)

3.3.2.1 NATURE AND COMPOSITION

The Experience of Work and Life Circumstances Questionnaire (Van Zyl & Van der Walt, 1991 cited in Oosthuizen & Koortzen, 2007) is based on the experience and causes of job stress. A person with a high score on the items indicates a high level of stress experience, which relates to problems from the environment.

The questionnaire can be utilised for the measurement of stress levels experienced as well as the nature of the important causes of stress of employees. The results can therefore be

utilised to identify employees that are functioning under high levels of stress and to determine the main stressors in their environments. This self-assessment questionnaire consists of two dimensions, namely: experience of the job and circumstances and expectations of the job (Oosthuizen & Koortzen, 2007).

The questionnaire consists of 76 items that are answered on a five-point likert scale (Scale B in the case of circumstances and Scale C in the case of expectations) to indicate how often specific emotions occur, responses range from ‘virtually never to virtually always’ (Van Zyl & Van der Walt, 1991 cited in Oosthuizen & Koortzen, 2007).

The first dimension of the questionnaire, which measures the way the job is experienced, indicates the level of stress of the employee, and whether an employee experiences stress at a normal, high or very high level. Measurement is conducted through the assessment of 40 questions on a five-point scale (Scale A), which indicate how often certain stress emotions (for example, depression, anxiety and frustration) occur. A high score indicates a high level of stress. The second dimension of the questionnaire measures the circumstances and expectations of the job and indicates the level of stress experienced by the employee. The circumstances section consists of 23 items, and include sample item such as ‘how often do you feel in your organisation...’ Questions are asked about the way an individual feel about important circumstances within and outside their work. The expectation section consists of 53 items, and include sample item such as ‘how often do you feel in your organisation that...’ Questions are asked about the extent to which an

individual feel that their expectations with regard to their job are realized (Van Zyl & Van der Walt, 1991 cited in Oosthuizen & Koortzen, 2007).

3.3.2.2 PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

3.3.2.2.1 Validity

The questionnaire is assumed to have content validity because the items were developed according to a theoretical model and evaluated by a panel of experts. With regards to construct validity, Van Zyl and Van der Walt (1991 cited in Oosthuizen & Koortzen, 2009) report correlations among the various fields or scales of the questionnaire, ranging between 0.05 and 0.72 (absolute values). Further evidence regarding construct validity was obtained by correlating scale totals with the relevant factors of the 16PF questionnaire (Forms A and E) (Cattell, Eber & Tatsuoka, 1970 cited in Oosthuizen & Koortzen, 2009) and the PHSF Relationships Questionnaire (Fouché & Grobbelaar, 1971 cited in Oosthuizen & Koortzen, 2009) correlations varied between 0.00 and 0.46 (Oosthuizen & Koortzen, 2009).

3.3.2.2.2 Reliability

The reliability estimates for the scales of the Experience of Work and Life Circumstances Questionnaire appeared to be satisfactory. Internal-consistency reliability coefficients for the questionnaire scales, as measured by Kuder-Richardson Formula 8, ranged from 0.83 to 0.92. The obtained test/retest reliabilities varied from 0.62 to 0.80 (Van Zyl & Van der Walt, 1991 cited in Oosthuizen & Koortzen, 2009).

3.3.3 MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY QUESTIONNAIRE (MBI)

3.3.3.1 NATURE AND COMPOSITION

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI cited in Maslach & Jackson, 1981) consists of 22 items and is answered on a seven-point Likert scale where responses range from '1 = never to 7 = everyday'. The questionnaire consists of three subscales, namely: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment. The Emotional Exhaustion subscale consists of 9 items, describing feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. The item with the highest factor loading (0.84 on frequency and 0.81 on intensity) is the one referring directly to 'I feel burned out from my work.' The Depersonalized subscale consists of 5 items, describing an unfeeling and impersonal response towards recipients in one's care or service. A sample item would be: 'I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.' The Personal Accomplishment subscale consists of 8 items that describes feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The 9 items on the Emotional Exhaustion subscale describes feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. On this factor, the item with the highest factor loading (0.84 on frequency and 0.81 on intensity) is the one referring directly to burnout, for example, 'I feel burned out from my work' (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

For both the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales, higher mean scores correspond to higher degrees of experienced burnout. Since some of the component items on each subscale had low loadings on the other, there is a moderate correlation between

the two subscales (0.44 for frequency and 0.50 for intensity). Such a correlation is in accord with theoretical expectations that these are separate, but related aspects of burnout. In contrast, the lower mean scores of the Personal Accomplishment subscale correspond to higher degrees of experienced burnout. It is therefore important to note that the Personal Accomplishment subscale is independent of the other subscales (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

3.3.3.2 PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

3.3.3.2.1 Validity

Firstly, an individual's MBI (Maslach Burnout Inventory) scores were correlated with behavioural ratings made independently by a person who knew the individual well (that is, one's spouse or co-workers). Secondly, MBI scores were correlated with the presence of certain job characteristics that were expected to contribute to experienced burnout. Thirdly, MBI scores were correlated with measures of various outcomes that had been hypothesized to be related to burnout. All three sets of correlations provided substantial evidence for the validity of the MBI. Convergent validity was demonstrated in several ways. The three subscales have a high internal validity and yield coefficients of 0.899 (emotional exhaustion), 0.808 (depersonalisation) and 0.769 (personal accomplishment) (Schaufeli et al., 2001).

3.3.3.2.2 Reliability

The reliability coefficients for the subscales were 0.89 (frequency) and 0.86 (intensity) for Emotional Exhaustion, 0.74 (frequency) and 0.74 (intensity) for Personal

Accomplishment, 0.77 (frequency) and 0.72 (intensity) for Depersonalization. Internal consistencies (Cronbach's coefficients) are usually above .70, except in some samples for the depersonalization scale (Schaufeli et al., 2001).

3.3.4 EMOTIONAL LABOUR SCALE

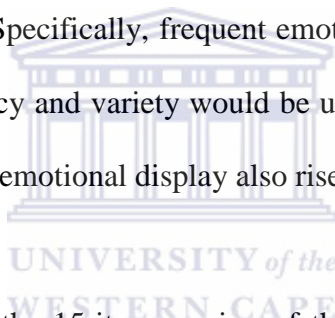
3.3.4.1 NATURE AND COMPOSITION

Drawing largely on the work of Hoschild (1983 cited in Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) and Morris and Feldman (1996 cited in Brotheridge & Lee, 2003, 1997 cited in Brotheridge & Lee, 2003), the Emotional Labour Scale measures surface and deep acting as two separate dimensions. It also measures emotion-related role requirements, specifically, the duration of interactions, frequency, intensity and variety of emotional display. These are expected to foster a perceived need for effort (that is, deep and surface acting) (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).

In the 19-item version of the Emotional Labour Scale items with item-total correlations falling below .40 and cross-factor loadings above .20 were either excluded or revised, resulting in the 15-item version of the Emotional Labour Scale which was utilized in Study 2 (undergraduate business students attending a university located on the Canadian prairies). The purpose of the 15-item version of the ELS utilized in Study 2 was to validate the factor structure of the ELS and to examine evidence of its convergent and discriminant validity. The ELS is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 15-item that measure six facets of emotional labour, namely, the frequency, intensity and variety of

emotional display, the duration of interaction, as well as surface and deep acting (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). The ELS employs a 5-point Likert scale with anchors never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4) and always (5). A sample item would be: “on an average day at work, how frequently do you display certain emotions required by your job” (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003, p. 368).

In relation to the four role requirements associated with EL, Morris and Feldman (1996 cited in Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) posited that the frequency, intensity, duration and variety of emotional expression would have positive, negative, or non-existent relationships with each other. Specifically, frequent emotional displays would limit their duration and intensity, frequency and variety would be unrelated, and variety would rise as the duration and intensity of emotional display also rise (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).



In the descriptive statistics of the 15-item version of the ELS utilized in study 2, to a certain extent the mean duration of customer interactions reflects the diversity of occupations in the sample. A large proportion of the sample includes service/sales workers who tend to have relatively brief interactions with their customers. The human service professionals, however, reported interactions of significantly longer durations. These differences are expected and may be parallel to the differences between brief service encounters and service relationships which are of longer duration (Gutek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth & Cherry, 1999 cited in Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).

3.3.4.2 PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

3.3.4.2.1 Validity

According to the 15-item version of the ELS, Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated the existence of six one-dimensional sub-scales, and evidence of convergent and discriminant validity was also cited (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). According to Brotheridge and Lee (2003), respondents of the 15-item version of the Emotional Labour scale, were able to distinguish between the various role characteristics (that is, variety, intensity, duration and frequency of emotional display) (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).

In order to establish the convergent validity of the ELS, it is necessary to demonstrate its correlation with scales which measure the same constructs or with scales that one would expect to be associated with it (Nunnally & Berstein, 1994 cited in Brotheridge & lee, 2003). Discriminant validity is established by the presence of non-significant or low correlations with the scales that one would not expect to be associated with the subscales of the ELS. As a means of demonstrating that the ELS measures ‘something different from existing methods’ (Nunnally & Berstein, 1994, p. 93 cited in Brotheridge & lee, 2003), its correlations with existing scales which measure related constructs should not be extremely high (Brotheridge & lee, 2003).

3.3.4.2.2 Reliability

As mentioned in the nature and composition of the ELS, items were excluded or revised to form the 15-item version of the ELS. For the most part, the item-total correlations achieved were at .40 or greater and the subscales demonstrated adequate levels of internal

consistency (Cronbach's values ranged from .68 to .85). The exception was the scale measuring the intensity of emotions displayed (Cronbach value = .58) which contained three items, none of which were highly correlated with the overall scale. According to the 15-item version of the ELS scale, the internal consistency (Cronbach's α) of the subscales proved satisfactory, ranging from .74 for intensity to .83 for deep acting (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).

3.3.5 TURNOVER INTENTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

3.3.5.1 NATURE AND COMPOSITION

The measure of the Turnover Intentions Questionnaire was addressed by an unpublished questionnaire developed by Roodt (2004 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008). This questionnaire was used because various researchers have applied a single item scale (Guimaraes, 1997 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008; Lambert, Hogan & Barton, 2001 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008) with obvious metric limitations, while a few other studies have used more than three items per instrument (Becker, 1992 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008; Fox & Fallon, 2003 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008; Lum, et al., 1998 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008).

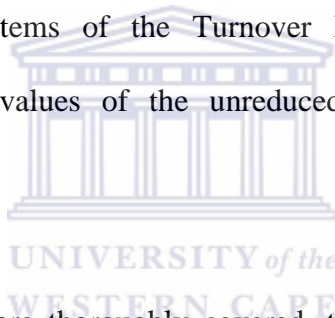
The questionnaire consists of 14 items that were measured on a seven point intensity response scale anchored at extreme poles (example, "never/to no extent/low/always" 1-low intensity, to "most of the times/to a large extent/ high/ always" 7-high intensity). Examples of items included in this questionnaire (Roodt, 2004) were: "How often have

you recently considered leaving your job?” and “How frequently have you been scanning news papers for new job opportunities?”

3.3.5.2 PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

3.3.5.2.1 Validity and Reliability

In order to determine the sampling adequacy and sphericity of the item intercorrelation matrix, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity were respectively conducted on the item intercorrelation of the instrument. A result of 0.6 and higher is required from the MSA to be acceptable (Hair et al., 1998). The items of the Turnover Intentions Questionnaire were intercorrelated and the eigenvalues of the unreduced intercorrelation matrix were calculated.



Although turnover intentions are thoroughly covered, there is still a need to validate scales formally to represent turnover cognitions (Sager et al., 1998 cited in Martin & Roodt, 2008). The Various researchers have used only one item (Guimaraes, 1997 cited in Jacobs & Roodt, 2008). The approach to use single-item indicators to measure turnover cognitions is criticised as construct validity is unknown (Sager et al., 1998 cited in Jacobs & Roodt, 2008).

The result obtained from the iterative reliability analysis of the Turnover Intentions Questionnaire yielded a Cronbach Alpha of 0.913, indicating an acceptable reliability. A Cronbach Alpha of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable (Cortina, 1993). Various

researchers make a distinction between intention to search and intention to quit (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Sager et al., 1998). A question such as “How often have you recently considered leaving your job?” probably measure intention to quit or leave, while a question such as “How frequently have you been scanning news papers for new job opportunities?” probably measure intention to search (Roodt, 2004).

3.4 RATIONALE FOR USE OF INSTRUMENTS

All the instruments were selected mainly as they have been validated and considered to be suitable for the study within a South African context.

3.4.1 The Experience of Work and Life Circumstances Questionnaire

The questionnaire is based on the experience and causes of job stress. A person with a high score on the items indicates a high level of stress experience, which relate to problems from the environment (Van Zyl & Van der Walt, 1991). The rationale for using the questionnaire is because it has been standardised for South African circumstances and it has satisfactory validity and reliability results (Van Zyl, 1994).

3.4.2 Maslach Burnout Inventory Questionnaire

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 cited in Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin, Schaap & Kladler, 2001) showed that the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1986 cited in Schaufeli et al., 2001; Maslach et al., 1996 cited in Schaufeli et al., 2001) is by far the most popular instrument to assess burnout; over 90% of journal articles and dissertations used the MBI (Schaufeli et al., 2001). An impressive literature documents

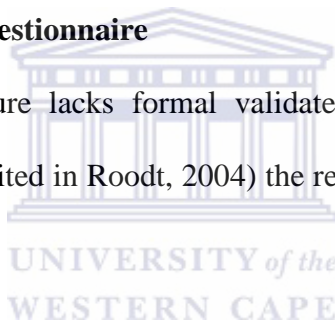
the psychometric quality of the MBI, particularly in human services professions. Internal consistency was estimated by Cronbach's coefficient alpha, which yielded reliability coefficients of 0.83 (frequency) and 0.84 (intensity).

3.4.3 Emotional Labour Scale Questionnaire

For the purpose of this research the 15-item version of the Emotional Labour Scale (ELS) by Brotheridge and Lee (2003) was used because it is the most recent and updated EL scale, and it was developed and validated by the researchers.

3.4.4 Turnover Intentions Questionnaire

Although the turnover literature lacks formal validated scales to represent turnover cognitions (Sager et al., 1998 cited in Roodt, 2004) the reliability results were considered acceptable.



3.5 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

Statistical analyses involved both descriptive and inferential statistics which include Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient, T-Tests, ANNOVA and multiple regression analysis.

3.5.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the data under study. Some descriptive statistics summarize the distribution of attributes on a single variable while others summarize the associations between variables (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). The purpose of

descriptive statistics is merely to describe a set of data, therefore descriptive statistics are used to report measures that describe average latency scores on their variability (Howell, 1999). When data are collected the observations must be organised in such a fashion to allow the researcher to correctly interpret the data and trace underlying trends (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The descriptive statistics used in this research are frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations.

3.5.2 INFERENCE STATISTICS

Inferential statistics are used to estimate the generalizability of findings arrived at through the analysis of a sample to the larger population from which the sample has been selected. Some inferential statistics estimate the single variable characteristics of the population; other tests that are of statistical significance estimate the relationships between variables in the population (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

3.5.3 THE PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENT

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation method is the most commonly used method of computing a correlation coefficient between variables that are linearly related. The correlation is a statistic representing how closely two variables co-vary. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation is an appropriate measure of association to be used in the analysis of two interval or ratio variables (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

The rationale behind using the procedure is continuous data; continuous variables can take on any value or range of values. Pearson is considered to be appropriate when

variables are continuous (Pretorius, 1995). This can therefore be determined by the use of the deviation that can either be above or below the mean (Anastasi & Ubrina, 1997). The Pearson method is used to determine the degree of the relationship, whether there is a strong or weak relationship between stress, burnout, emotional labour and intentions to leave.

3.5.4 T-TEST

A T-Test is any statistical hypothesis test in which the test follows a t-distribution if the null hypothesis is true. It is most commonly applied when the test structure would follow a normal distribution if the value of a scaling term in the test statistic were known. When the scaling term is unknown and is replaced by an estimate based on data, the test statistic (under certain conditions) follows a t-distribution (Sekaran, 2003). The t-test is used to determine if there are any significant differences in stress, burnout and emotional labour based on the gender of the respondents.

3.5.5 ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA)

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a parametric statistical method for comparing two or more groups in terms of another variable. The ANOVA is also called the F-test since the statistic that is used to test the significance of observed differences is called F-statistic. The appropriate formula for ANOVA is also indicated by F. The purpose of ANOVA is to compare the means of two or more groups in order to decide whether the observed difference between them represents a chance occurrence or systematic effect (Pretorius, 1995). The ANNOVA is used to determine if there are any differences in

stress, burnout and emotional labour based on the tenure and employment type of the respondents.

3.5.6 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Multiple regression is the extension of the use of a regression equation in predicting one variable from another, in situations involving more than one predictor (Pretorius, 1995). Multiple regression analysis is used to establish the extent to which various differing variables add to predict another variable (Anastasi & Ubrina, 1997).

Multiple regression solutions are usually quite cumbersome to compute by hand, especially with more than two predictors, but they can be readily computed with any of the widely available statistical programme. The multiple correlation coefficient indicated by the symbol R is an index of the relationship between all of the predictor variables and the outcome variable. If the predictor variables are generally unrelated to the outcome variable R would be low, and vice versa (Howell, 1999).

This method is used to determine the differences in stress, burnout and emotional labour's results in call centre employees' intentions to leave the call centre.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research methodology was discussed in terms of the research design with respect to the method and sampling approach used. Furthermore, the procedure followed, the measuring instruments used: (namely, Biographical Questionnaire, the

Experience of Work Life Circumstances Questionnaire (WLCQ), Maslach Burnout Inventory Questionnaire (MBI), Emotional Labour Scale and Turnover Intention Questionnaire) were outlined. The chapter concludes with the statistical techniques used: (namely, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient , T-Test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Multiple Regression Analysis and Scheffe's Test) to test the hypotheses.

In the next chapter the results are presented and interpreted with the use of the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer programme.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous section, the research methodology and design utilised during the current study were outlined. The information provided and discussed in the previous chapters will serve as a background against which the contents of this chapter will be presented and interpreted and is based on the empirical analyses conducted to test the hypotheses.

The statistical programme used for the analyses and presentation of data in this research is the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17. The descriptive statistics computed for the study are presented first in an outline of the characteristics of the sample with regards to the variables included in the study. The descriptive statistics calculated for the sample are provided in the sections that follow. That is, the data pertaining to the variables included in the study, as collected by the four measuring instruments employed, are summarised by means of calculation of descriptive measures. In this manner, the properties of the observed data clearly emerge and an overall picture thereof is obtained.

Thereafter, the analyses of the constructs relevant to the study, that is, stress, burnout, emotional labour and turnover intentions, are presented with the aid of inferential statistical procedures. Conclusions are then drawn on the basis of the obtained results.

4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

This section outlines the descriptive statistics calculated on the basis of the variables included in the biographical questionnaire. The demographic variables that receive attention are gender, age, designated group, marital status, children, number of children, highest qualification, furthering qualification, tenure, work shift and employment contract. Descriptive statistics, in the form of frequencies and percentages, are subsequently presented graphically for each of the above-mentioned variables based on the characteristics of the research sample ($n = 163$).

4.2.1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



Figure 4.1: Age of respondents

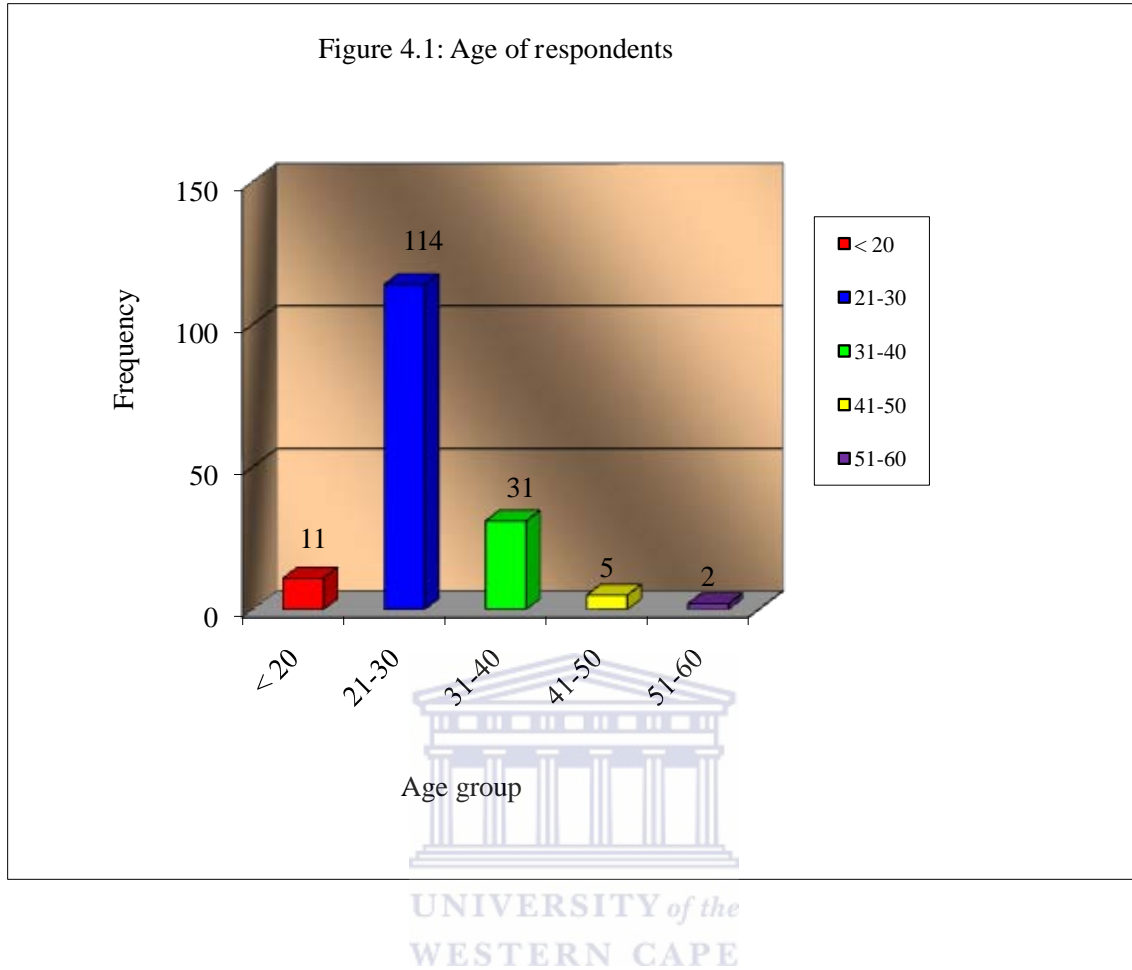
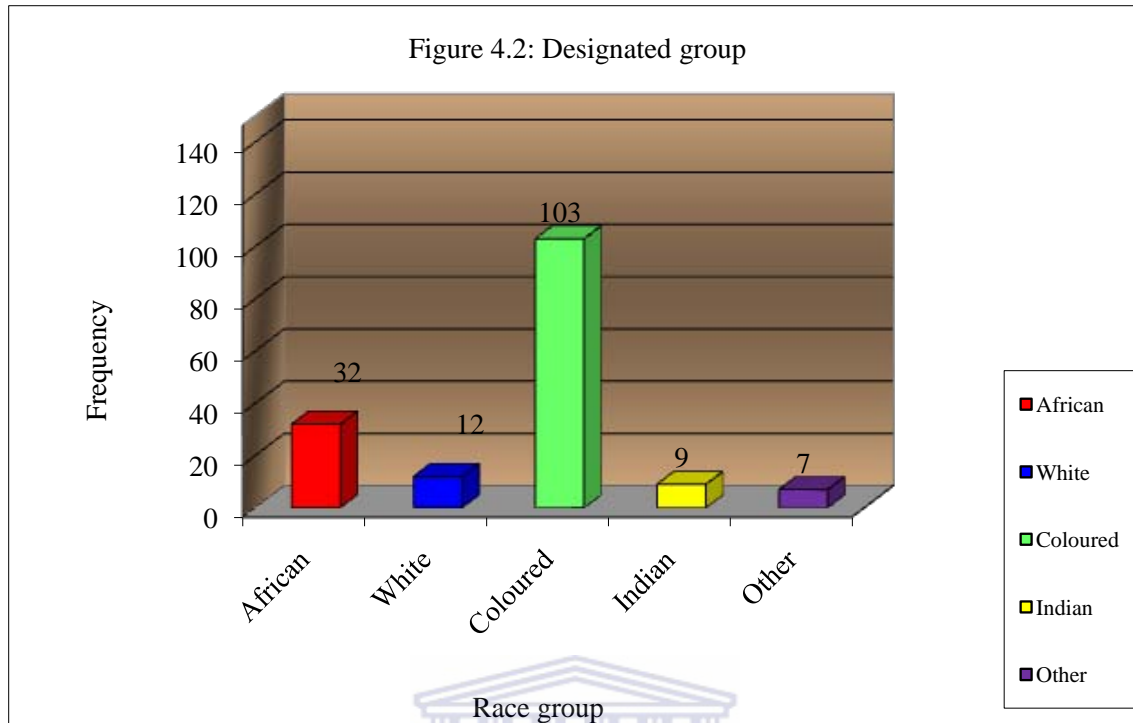
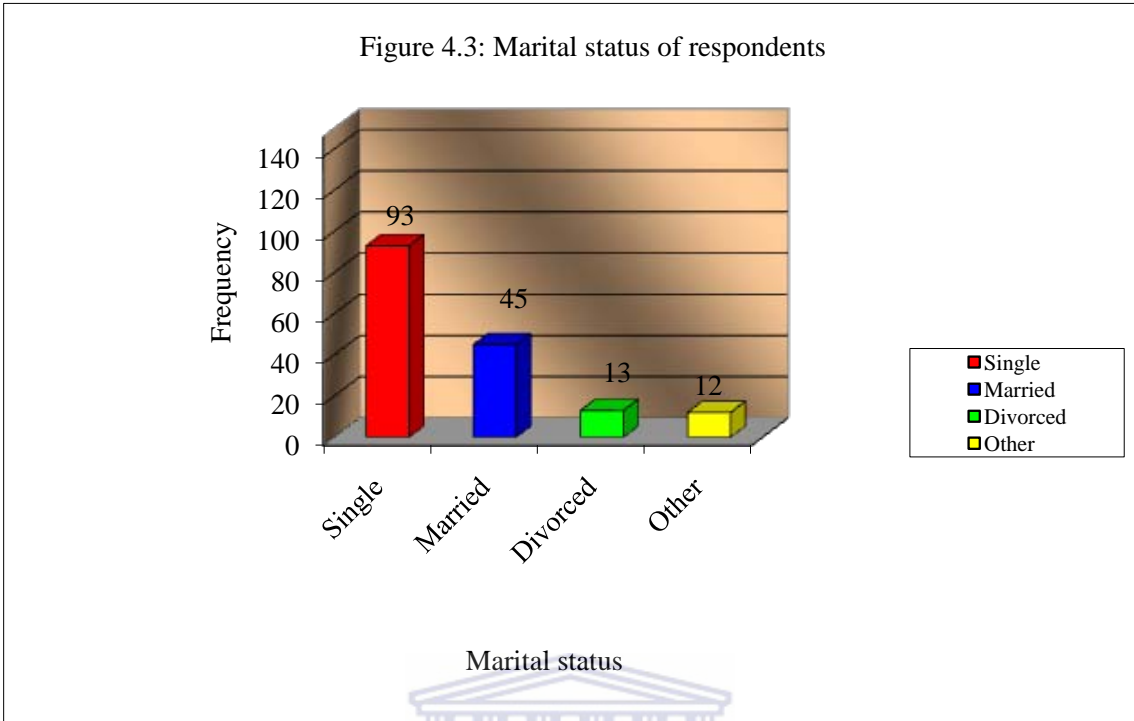


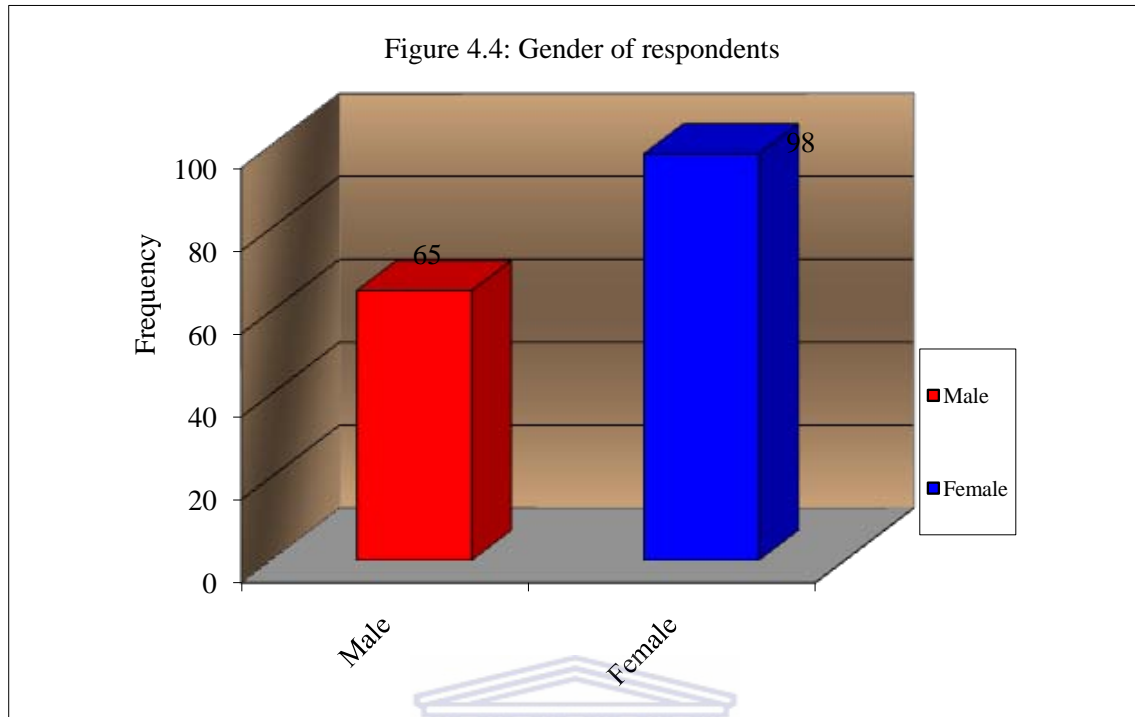
Figure 4.1 indicates that the majority of the respondents, that is 70% ($n = 114$) is in the age group 21-30 years, while 19% ($n = 31$) is in the age group 31-40. A further 7% ($n = 11$) is less than 20 years of age, and 3% ($n = 5$) is between the age group 41-50. The smallest proportion is represented by those in the age category 51-60 in which only 1 percent ($n = 2$) is in the age group 51-60).



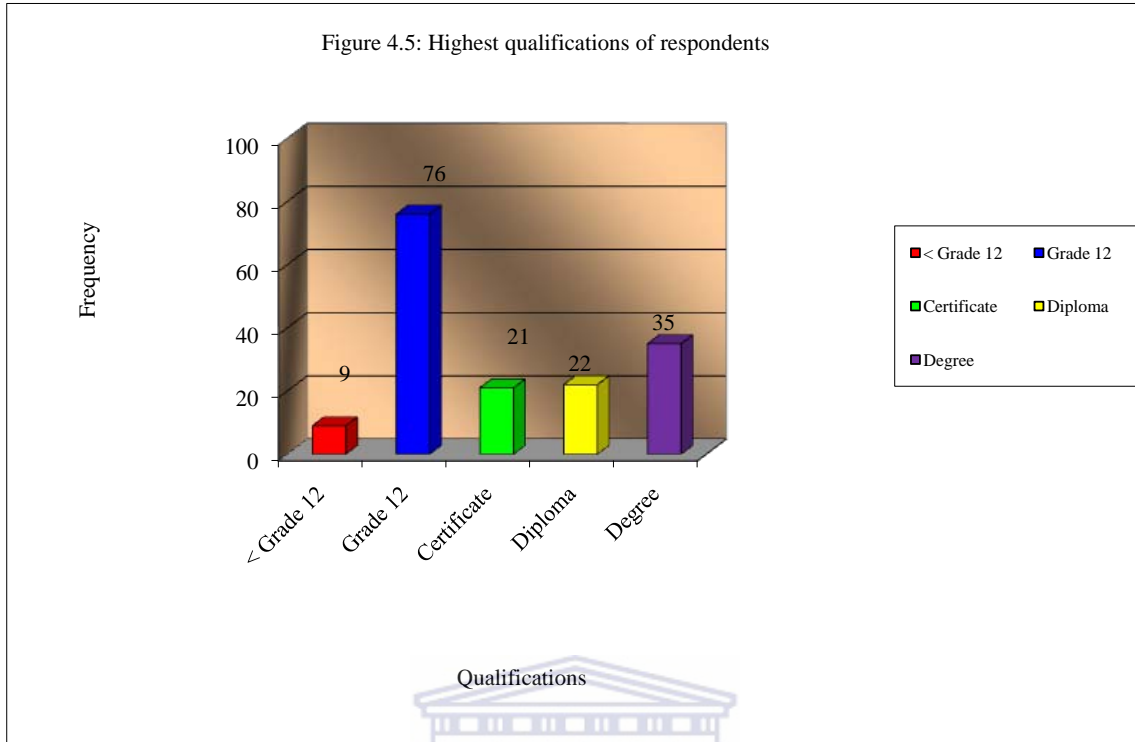
The majority of the respondents is Coloured (n = 103) representing 63% of the participants, while African respondents constituted a further 20% (n = 32). White respondents made up 7% (n =12) of the respondents, Indians made up 6% (n =9) and those in the other category represented the remaining 4% (n =7).



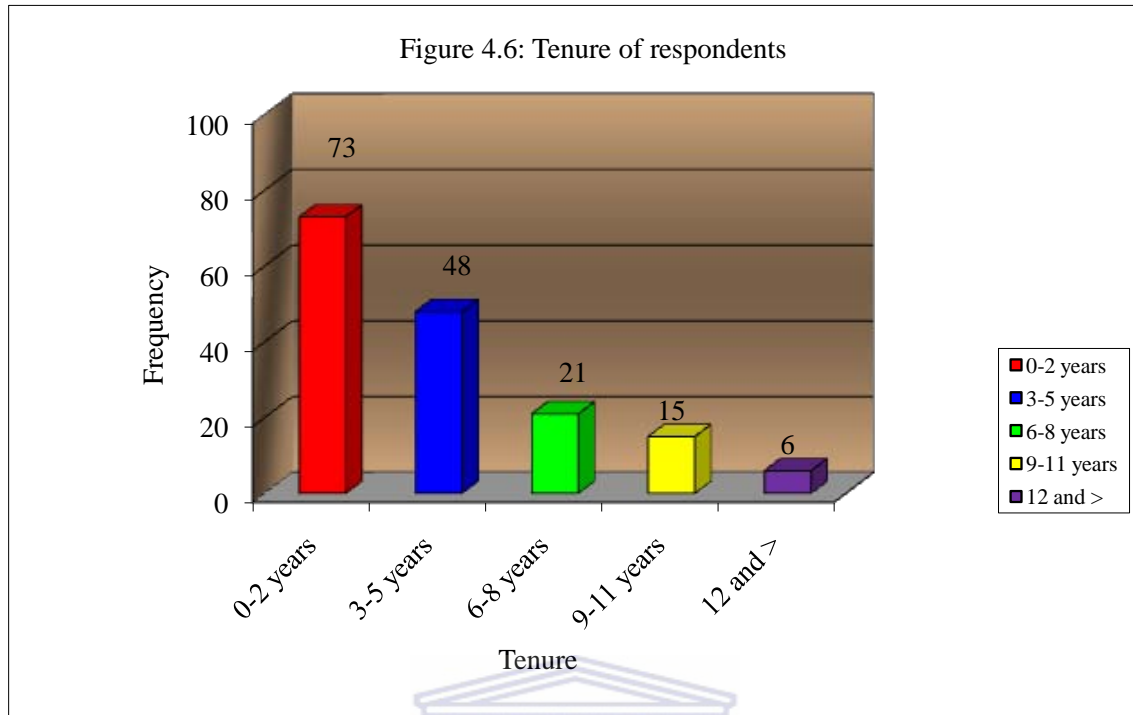
Those that are single ($n = 93$) represented 57% of respondents, while married respondents ($n = 45$), comprised a further 28% of the sample. Thirteen (13) employees, that is 8% of the sample, was divorced and a further 7% ($n = 12$) represented the other category.



The majority of the respondents constituting 60% of the sample was female (n = 98), while the remaining respondents (40%) were male (n = 65).

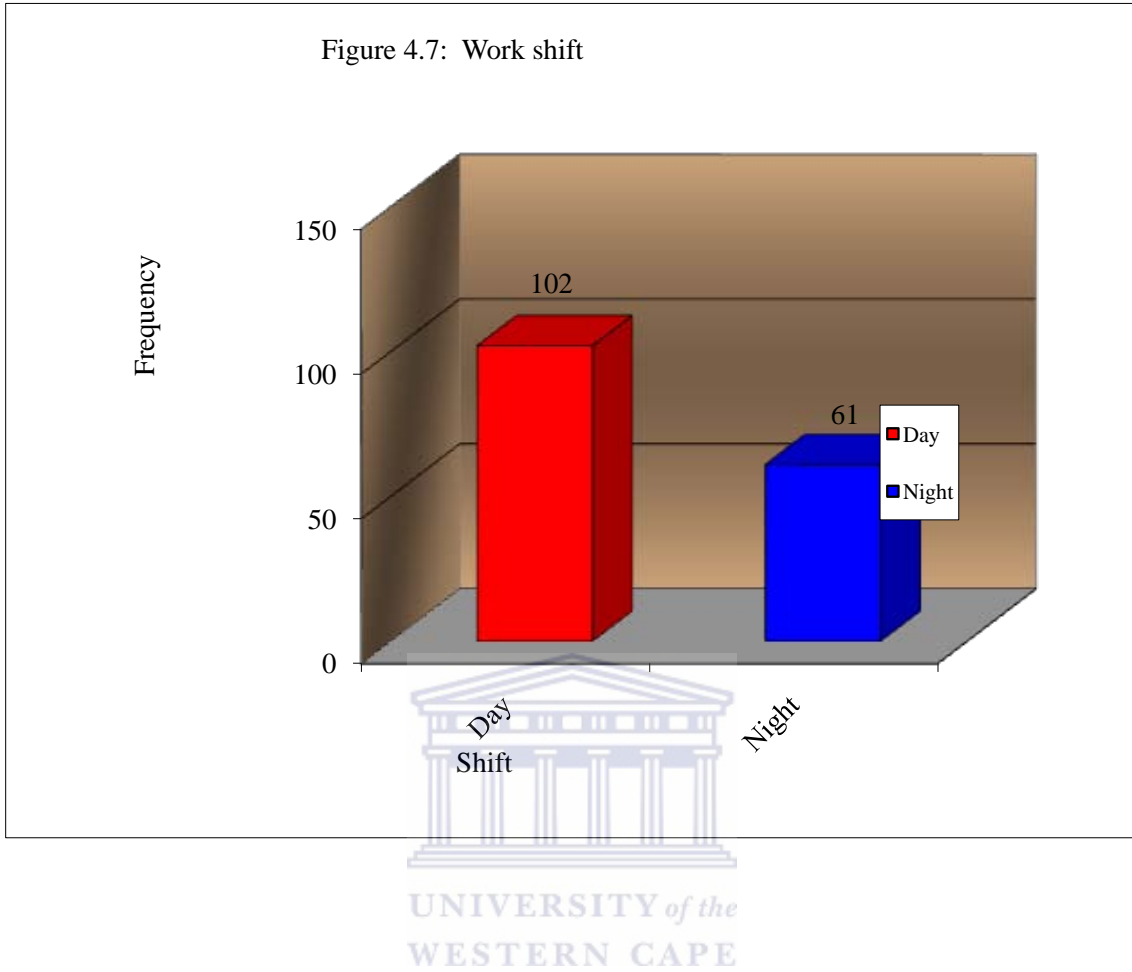


Respondents with Grade 12 qualifications comprised 47% of the sample ($n = 76$), while those with a degree constituted 21% of the sample ($n = 35$). A further 13% ($n = 22$) had completed diplomas, while approximately 13% ($n = 21$) has certificates. Only 6% of the sample ($n = 9$) had qualifications lower than Grade 12.

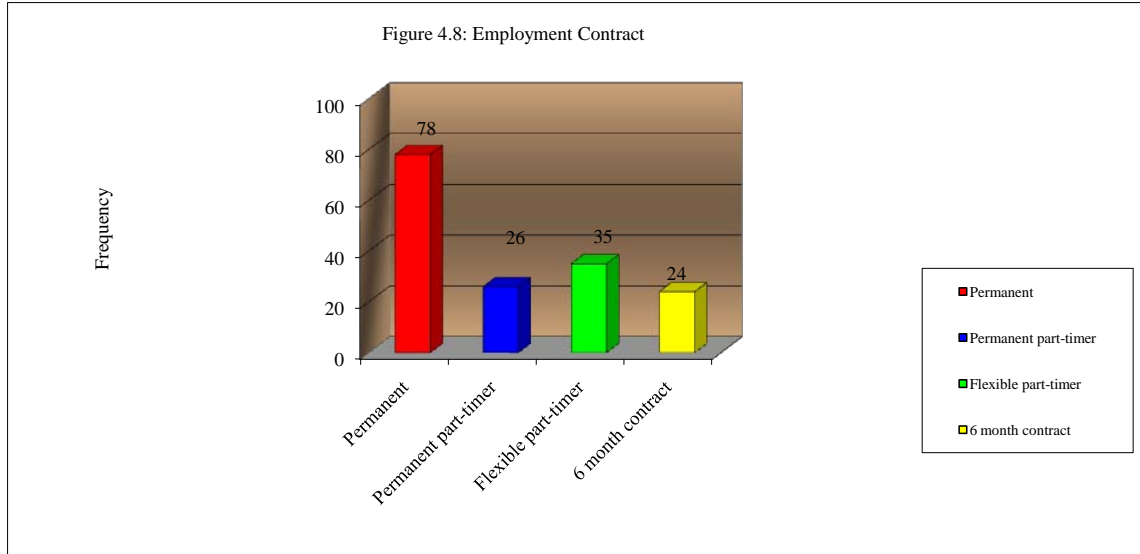


The figure depicts a sample that has not worked in the organisation for an extensive period of time. The majority of respondents (45%) has been in the employment of the organisation for between 0 and 2 years ($n = 73$), while 29% ($n = 48$) have been with the organisation for 3-5 years. Those with 6-8 years tenure comprise a further 13% ($n = 21$) of the respondents while only 4% ($n = 6$) have been with the organisation for more than 12 years.

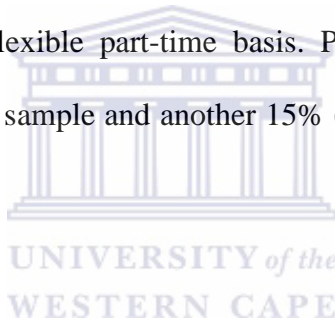
Figure 4.7: Work shift



Employees working on the day shift comprised the majority of the respondents (63%, $n = 102$), while the remaining 37% were night shift employees ($n = 61$).



The majority of the respondents (48%) were permanent employees ($n = 78$), and 21% ($n = 35$) were employed on a flexible part-time basis. Permanent part time employees constituted 16% ($n = 26$) of the sample and another 15% ($n = 24$) were employed on a 6-month contractual basis.



4.2.1 INFERENCE STATISTICS

The following section addresses the results obtained for the inferential statistics to ascertain the relationship between stress, burnout, emotional labour and turnover intention.

Table 4.1 Pearson correlation between stress, burnout, emotional labour and turnover intention

	Turnover Intention	
	Pearson	Sig (2-tailed)
Stress	0.37	0.005**
Burnout	0.41	0.002**
Emotional labour	0.65	0.000**

** $p < 0.01$



Table 4.1 indicates the relationship between stress, burnout, emotional labour and intention to leave the organisation amongst call centre employees.

The results indicate that there is a moderate relationship between stress and intention to leave the organisation amongst the sample of employees ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$). There was also a significant relationship between burnout and intention to leave the organisation ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, there was a significant relationship between emotional labour and intention to leave the organisation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$). All the relationships are direct, indicating that higher levels of stress, higher levels of burnout and higher levels of

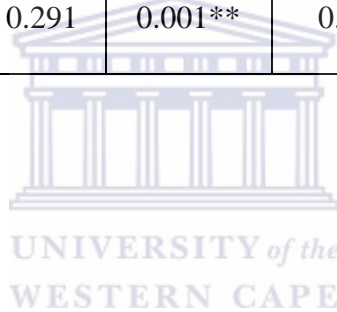
emotional labour are likely to translate into an elevation in the extent to which employees may wish to leave the organisation. **Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.**

Table 4.2 T-test indicating stress and burnout differences based on gender

	Stress		Burnout	
	t	P	t	p
Gender	0.291	0.001**	0.389	0.045*

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$



A t-test was conducted to establish whether there were any significant differences in stress and burnout based on the gender of the respondents. The results indicate that there were significant differences in stress amongst call centre employees based on their gender ($t = 0.291$, $p < 0.01$). There were also significant differences in burnout based on gender ($t = 0.389$, $p < 0.05$). **Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.**

Table 4.3 ANOVA indicating stress and burnout differences based on tenure and employment type

	Stress		Burnout	
	F	P	F	p
Tenure	0.27	0.03*	0.04	0.948
Employment type	0.54	0.00**	0.53	0.02*

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$



The results exploring whether there are significant differences in stress and burnout based on the tenure and employment status and tenure of call centre employees are presented in the table above. The results indicate that there are significant differences in stress on the basis of tenure ($F = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$), as well as between stress and employment type ($F = 0.54$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, there are significant differences between employment type and burnout ($F = 0.53$, $p < 0.05$). However, there was no significant difference in tenure and burnout ($F = 0.04$, $p > 0.05$). **Hence, the null hypothesis would be partially rejected.**

Table 4.4 T-test indicating emotional labour differences based on gender

	Emotional Labour	
	t	p
Gender	0.691	0.03*

The results in the study indicate that there are significant differences between emotional labour based on gender ($t = 0.691, p < 0.05$). **Hence, the null hypothesis would be rejected.**

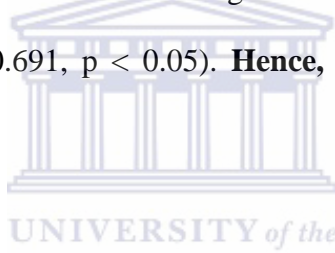


Table 4.5 ANOVA indicating emotional labour differences based on tenure and employment type

	Emotional labour	
	F	p
Tenure	4.309	0.02*
Employment Type	1.829	0.136

The results indicate that there are significant differences in emotional labour based on tenure ($F=4.309$, $p < 0.05$), while there are no significant differences in emotional labour based on employment type ($F =1.829$, $p > 0.05$). **Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.**

Table 4.6 Multiple regression: stress, emotional labour, burnout and intention to leave

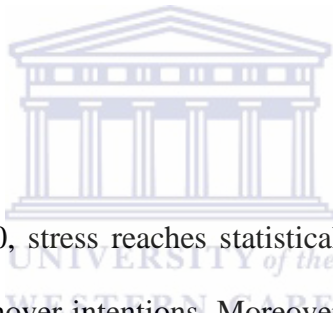
Multiple R	0.59243		
R Square	0.35097		
Adjusted R Square	0.32687		
Standard error	13.09434		
F	5.325214		
Sign F	0.00**		
Variable	Beta	T	Sig T
Stress	0.227450	0.254	0.004**
Burnout	0.22052	1.112	0.023*
Emotional labour	0.146630	1.325	0.037*

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 4.6 presents the results of the regression analysis, regressing the three core variables, namely stress, burnout and emotional labour on intention to leave the organisation. Results indicate that the multiple R-value is 0.59243, as indicated by Multiple R. The R-Squared value of 0.35097 indicates that approximately 35% of the variance in turnover intentions can be accounted for by these three variables.

The F-statistic of 5.325214 is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Hence, it may be concluded that the three variables of stress, burnout and emotional labour significantly explain 35% of the variance in turnover intentions. **Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.**



With a Beta-value of 0.227450, stress reaches statistical significance at the 0.01 level, and is the best predictor of turnover intentions. Moreover, burnout and emotional labour are statistically significant at the 0.05 level and are hence significant predictors of turnover intentions.

Table 4.7 Reliability of the Experience of work and life circumstances questionnaire, the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Emotional Labour Scale and the Intention to Leave Questionnaire

Dimension	Number of items	N	Cronbach
WLCQ	116	163	0.78
Maslach Burnout Inventory	5	163	0.80
Emotional Labour Scale	22	163	0.70
Turover Intentions Questionnaire	14	163	0.77

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the scale. Table 4.8 shows that acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained for all the subscales, varying from 0.7 to 0.8. Scores on all the subscales seem to be distributed normally, because the skewness and kurtosis are within the guidelines of lower -2 or higher than $+2$ as required by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). As all coefficients were above 0.7, they can be regarded as acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

4.3 CONCLUSION

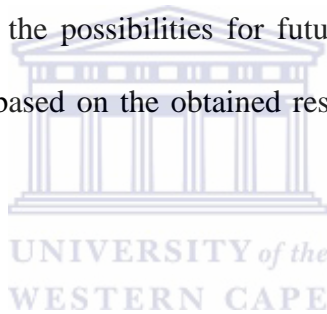
This chapter has provided an overview of the most salient findings obtained based on empirical analysis of the data. Chapter five presents a discussion of the findings obtained and contextualises the research findings based on previous research on stress, burnout, emotional labour and turnover intentions of call centre employees.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter commences with a discussion of the four hypotheses under investigation. The discussion will confirm whether the various hypotheses have been accepted or rejected. In order to contextualize the findings of the study reference will be made to studies conducted on stress, burnout, emotional labour and intention to leave amongst call centre employees. Where there is a paucity of studies conducted on call centre reference will be made to other service professions. Thereafter, the limitations of the study will be discussed with the possibilities for future research recommendations. Conclusions are then drawn based on the obtained results and recommendations for the organisation are put forth.



5.2 DISCUSSION

5.2.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

In this study, the sample consisted of 163 call centre employees in the collection department within a retail call centre. As seen in Figure 4.1 the majority of the respondents, that is 70% (n = 114) is in the age group 21-30 years. The majority of the respondents as observed in Figure 4.2 are Coloured (n = 103) representing 63% of the participants. Those that are single (n = 93) represented 57% respondents as reported in Figure 4.3. As viewed in Figure 4.4 the majority of the respondents were female, constituting 60% of the sample (n = 98). The majority of the of respondents with Grade 12 qualifications as reported in Figure 4.5 comprised of 47% of the sample (n = 76).

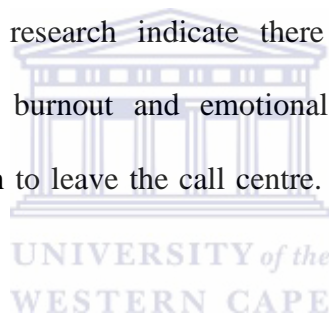
With regards to tenure, the majority of the respondents (45%) has been in the employment of the organisation for between 0 and 2 years (n = 73). Figure 4.7, indicated that employees working on the day shift comprised (63%, n = 102) of the sample with (48%) being permanent employees (n = 78) (figure 4.8).

5.2.2 INFERENCE STATISTICS

5.2.2.1 HYPOTHESIS 1:

There is a statistically significant relationship between stress, burnout and emotional labour amongst call centre employees and their intention to leave.

The results of the current research indicate there is a statistically significant relationship between stress, burnout and emotional labour amongst call centre employees and their intention to leave the call centre. *Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.*

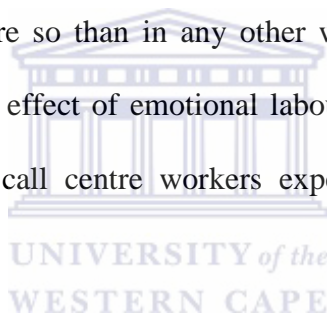


As there is a paucity of research relating to stress, burnout and emotional labour amongst call centre employees reference will also be made to other ‘human service’ professions.

Hochschild (1979; 1983 cited in Deery et al., 2002) claimed that job-related burnout is one of the most likely outcomes of the performance of emotional labour. She believed that staff who were employed in jobs with sustained customer contact and few opportunities which varied the nature of their displayed feelings risked high levels of stress.

Pienaar and Rothmann (2003) posit that the degree of stress experienced by employees is dependent on (1) stress appraisal and (2) the effectiveness of the individual's coping strategies. The result of their study reveal that participants generally do not use avoidance coping strategies to address stressful events, but instead use problem-focussed strategies.

A study conducted by Holdworth and Cartwright (2003 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009) indicate that customer service representatives found all aspects of their job more stressful than the general working population. In a similar vein, a study by Singh and Goolsby (1994) also noted that employees working in call centres are highly prone to burnout, more so than in any other work environment. Lewig and Dollard (2003) examined the effect of emotional labour on emotional exhaustion in call centres and found that call centre workers experienced a moderate level of emotional exhaustion.



Hyman, Baldry, Scholarios and Bunzel (2003), evaluated the centrality of work to employees in two growing employment sectors, call-centres and software development. The study examines evidence for extensions of work into household and family life in these two sectors. Extensions are identified as tangible, such as unpaid overtime, or intangible, represented by incursions imported from work, such as exhaustion and stress. In terms of the results, approximately 40% of both call centre and software employees reported 'quite often' or 'always' feeling exhausted after work. Furthermore, 45% of the respondents in call centres reported feeling stressed in the job 'quite often' or 'all the time'. Holman (2002) reviewed three studies that examined the main causes of employee stress and well-being in call centres. The

findings revealed that employee well-being in call centres is associated with: effective job design; performance monitoring that is not perceived to be intense and which aims to develop employees; supportive management; and, supportive human resource practices. Furthermore, levels of well-being in call centres are shown to compare favourably to other forms of work. The studies challenge the image of call centres as “electronic sweatshops” and question the idea that call centre work is inevitably stressful. It is argued that managers have a choice in how to organise call centre work and can take steps to actively design employee stress out of call centre work.

Young and Cooper (1995) conducted a study in England to assess occupational stress amongst a group of ambulance and fire services personnel. The results showed that, for the ambulance group, significantly more stress was reported for factors intrinsic to the job, career and achievement, as well as organisational structure and climate than for the normative group. The significant differences in perceived stress were only found for the fire-fighter group in terms of their relationship with others. Analysis of variance revealed that organisational structure and climate were perceived as more stressful for the ambulance sample, whereas relationships with others produced more stress for the fire-fighter sample.

In contrast, Tuten and Neidermeyer (2004) measured the role of optimism and its effect on stress amongst 64 employees in a call centre. The results revealed that stress did not have the expected positive relationship to turnover intent. The results were consistent with the findings regarding stress and job satisfaction. Specifically, it appeared that because stress may be beneficial to employee satisfaction, no negative flight or organisational neglect is experienced. Additionally, while one’s optimistic

orientation is related to one's job satisfaction and performance, it is not related to one's intent to seek employment elsewhere. A similar finding occurred in a study of physicians conducted by Williams et al. (2001) where it was hypothesized that high stress would result in intentions to quit, change specialty or some other withdrawal behaviour. Physicians responded to increased stress with some form of withdrawal. However, they did not respond with a direct intention to quit.

Sager (1991 cited in Mbanga, 2004) raises a valid concern about the use of intention to quit and propensity to leave as surrogate measures of turnover. The author argues that while intention to quit might be a consistent precursor of turnover, it cannot be viewed as being a perfect surrogate. Authors such as Lucas, Parasuraman, Davis and Enis (1987 cited in Mbanga, 2004); Futrell, Parasuraman and Sager (1988 cited in Mbanga, 2004) also question the use of intention to quit as a sound predictor of actual turnover. Another study conducted by Sager and Menon (1994 cited in Mbanga, 2004) contend that a salesperson can intend to quit, but remain in a job indefinitely. These authors also report that intention to search for other jobs is a stronger predictor of salesperson's turnover than intention to quit. Their argument is based on the fact that intention to leave is a volatile construct that can change from day to day. An employee may intend to leave, yet remain in the job for some reason.

The results of several studies support the notion that customer related stressors leads to negative organisational and psychological consequences. Grandey, Dicker, and Sin (2002 cited in Dollard et al., 2003) found that intense verbal abuse by customers of call centre employees was related to negative mood at work. In turn, negative mood mediated the effect of abuse on job satisfaction and withdrawal behaviours. In a study

of negative events at work, Bitner, Booms and Mohr (1994 cited in Dollard et al., 2003) found that among those reported, 22% of customer related stressors occurred during participants' dealing with "problem customers."

Johnson et al., (2005) outlined that certain occupations are more likely to involve an emotional element of work suggesting that employees in these occupations are likely to be more vulnerable to stress than occupations that do not require emotional displays. Homan, Chissick and Totterdell (2002) investigated the relationship between performance monitoring and well-being, and also examined a mechanism, namely emotional labour amongst a sample of 347 customer service employees in two United Kingdom (U.K.) call centres. The results revealed that emotional labour did not mediate the relationship between monitoring and well-being in the form hypothesized, although it was related to these two factors. Work context (job control, problem solving demand, supervisory support) did not mediate the relationship between monitoring and well-being, but job control and supervisory support did moderate the relationship between perceived intensity and well-being.

Visser and Rothmann (2003) investigated the relationship between six characteristics of call centre work environments, burnout, affective commitment and turnover intentions amongst a sample of 146 employees within the call centre. These characteristics were competing management goals, work overload, electronic performance monitoring, lack of career opportunities, lack of skill variety and emotional labour. Multiple regression analysis showed that work overload, lack of career opportunities, skill variety and emotional labour were the most important predictors of burnout. Burnout had a direct effect on turnover intentions and affective

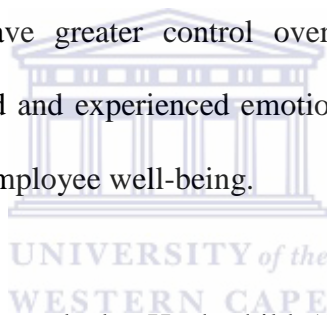
commitment partially mediated the relationship between burnout and turnover intention.

A study by Fisher, Milner and Chandraprakash (2007) described data from two samples of call centre employees in South Africa as typically portraying low levels of feelings about supervisory support, performance monitoring, autonomy, skill variety and task identity, and that these relate positively to feelings of intrinsic job satisfaction, anxiety and depression.

Koskina and Keithley (2009) conducted a study amongst call centre employees within one small to medium sized enterprise (SME) in the Greek telecommunications sector. The study explores the nature of emotion management in this workplace by looking at the context and control of emotional performances and the conditions that would guide positive work feelings. The findings illustrate the ways in which supportiveness, caring and nurturance intertwine to form a humane and understanding workplace. The study emphasised the positive side of emotion management and suggests that emotions in the study identify with work feelings rather than emotional labour. Although most other studies concerning emotions in call centres tend to focus on the negative experiences of call centre employees by drawing parallels to Taylorised production-lines and vocal sweatshops, the study illustrates the ways in which supportiveness, caring and nurturance intertwine to form a humane and understanding workplace. It stresses how workers in a quality-oriented workplace may consciously engage in authentic emotion work for commercial gains or as part of philanthropic emotion management and without any formalised form of managerial control. The study suggested that call centre employees occasionally performed a

certain form of emotion work, even if they were not strained by it. Their emotions were comfortably accommodated within a fluid structure that balanced the demands of differing values and goals of both management and employees (Koskina & Keithley, 2009).

Healy and Bramble (2003 cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006) revealed that depersonalisation can emerge with call centre employees if they distance themselves from perceived sources of emotional strain. Call centre employees are faced with the constant burden of meeting the customer's demands as quickly as possible, without compromising their performance in their manager's eyes. Holman (2003) indicate that if call centre employees have greater control over the emotions they display, dissonance between displayed and experienced emotions can be reduced, which can ultimately lead to improved employee well-being.



The qualitative findings of a study by Hochschild (1983) revealed that emotional dissonance is the mismatch between the emotions that have to be displayed and the emotions that one would like to display in a certain situation that is a stressor and can lead to psychological strain in the long run. It is therefore concluded that in jobs where interacting with clients is a substantial part of the work, traditional concepts of job stress do not suffice but should be complemented by concepts measuring emotional requirements and emotional dissonance at work (Zapf et al.,1999).

The research of Workman and Bommer (2004) support the conclusion in finding negative attitudes due to damaging experiences in the call centre environment result in

reduced productivity, poor customer service, higher turnover and absenteeism and ultimately, an adverse financial impact.

5.2.2.1 HYPOTHESIS 2:

There is a statistically significant difference in stress and burnout between call centre employees based on their biographical characteristics (namely; gender, tenure and employment type).

There is a paucity of research relating to stress and burnout amongst call centre employees based on gender reference will also be made to other ‘human service’ professions.



5.2.2.1.1 GENDER

The result of the current research indicate there was a significant difference in stress amongst call centre employees based on their gender, there was also a significant difference in burnout based on gender. *Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.*

Much of the research on gender and stress is contentious. There is evidence that men and women experience stress differently. A study conducted by Tung (1980) found that women experienced lower levels of stress compared to men.

Research conducted by Holman (2003) indicated that the causes of stress in call centres are similar to other types of organisations. In a study conducted by Oosthuizen and Koortzen (2007) where the aim was to evaluate job and family stressors amongst

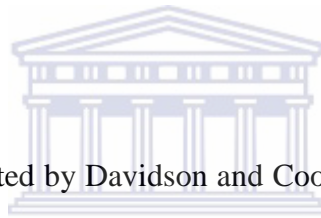
fire fighters in a South African context, the results indicated that male fire fighters experienced higher levels of family stress than female fire fighters due to causes arising outside the work situation. Male fire fighters often in their everyday life feel that family stress caused by, for example, death, the responsibility to provide for the family, illness and strife, have an adverse effect on their lives. Similarly, it was also found that the male fire fighters experienced higher job stress than female fire fighters due to causes originating within the work situation. The conclusion was drawn that they often feel that no-one wants to support them in their work and that their particular work situation compares unfavourably with others.

Some studies have suggested that women are more likely than men to use social support to cope with work stress (Hurst & Hurst, 1997; Thompson, Kirk- Brown, & Brown, 2001). Feldman and Schwartz (2002) evaluated potential gender differences in the relationship of support to burnout, satisfaction, or productivity. They entered gender into the model as a main effect and then included terms representing the interaction of gender and each dimension of support. Separate tests were then performed for each dimension of support. The results found that there were no significant gender differences in the relationship of any source of support to burnout, satisfaction, or productivity.

Spanenberg and Orpen-lyall (2000) examined the relationships between stress levels and, respectively, stressor appraisal, coping strategies and biographical variables amongst a sample of 107 managers. The results indicated that there were significant negative correlations between stress levels and appraisal scores on all work-related stressors for males and females. An avoidant coping strategy explained significant

variance in stress levels in a model also containing social support-seeking and problem-solving coping strategies. It was concluded that an avoidant coping strategy probably contributed to increased stress levels. The findings revealed that female managers experienced significantly higher stress levels and utilized a social support-seeking coping strategy significantly more than male managers did.

In a study by Van Zyl (2002) suggests that women have more stress than men and they are more prone to depression. Van den Bergh (2001 cited by Van Zyle, 2002) postulates that Black women are increasingly occupying managerial positions, sometimes without the necessary skills, experience and support which result in high levels of stress.



The results of a study conducted by Davidson and Cooper (1983) found that men and women responded differently to various types of stressors.

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Hochschild (1983 cited in Deery et al., 2002) suggested that women may be more at risk from emotional exhaustion because they are less protected than men from poor treatment of their feelings on the job. In this context, Macdonald and Sirianni (1996 cited in Deery et al., 2002) believed that women are expected to be more nurturing and empathetic than men and to tolerate more offensive behavior from customers. There has been however, little research into the effect of gender on emotional exhaustion.

Contrary to the results of the study above, Feldman and Schwartz (2002) examined support from different sources, including family, co-workers, and supervisors, in

which outcomes included subjective variables such as (burnout and job satisfaction). The study was conducted amongst 211 traffic enforcement employees (92 men, 119 women). Men and women had the same responsibilities and pay, which made them a useful sample in which to assess gender differences. However, the results of the study indicate that there was no gender differences found for any source of support and for any work-related outcome. Both men and women may be able to use support when it is available, and there is a significant need for support. Aamodt (2004) and Martocchio and O'Leary (1989) also did not find any significant gender differences in stress.

5.2.2.1.2 TENURE

The result of the current research indicates that there are significant differences in stress amongst call centre employees on the basis of tenure. However, there was no significant difference in tenure and burnout amongst call centre employees. **Hence, the null hypothesis would be partially rejected.**

Oosthuizen and Koortzen (2007) found that fire fighters with 2 - 5 years' experience in their occupation, experience high levels of family stress due to causes arising outside the work situation. The conclusion that was drawn from the study is that fire fighters often feel in their everyday life that rapidly changing technology poses a problem for them. Such feelings of insecurity about their abilities to cope with the new technology may be transferred to their families. They may feel that if they cannot cope, they may lose their jobs causing them to have no income to support their families. However, the results also indicate that fire fighters with less than 2 years' experience in their occupation experienced high levels of job stress due to causes

originating within the work situation. They often felt sad in their work and are often emotionally disturbed when involved in more tragic rescue operations.

Holdsworth and Cartwright (2002) explored the relationship between stress, satisfaction and the four dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, impact, self-determination and competence) within an insurance call centre; the results of the study predicted that longer tenure increased the perceptions of competence, demonstrated by a significant interaction between length of service and perceptions of competence ($F= 4.32, p< 0.019$) with 16 percent of the variation in feelings of competency accounted for by a difference in length of service.

5.2.2.1.3 EMPLOYMENT TYPE

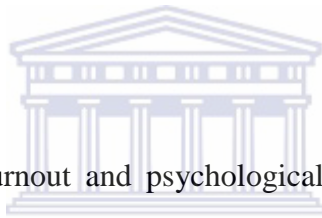
The result of the current research indicates that there are significant differences in stress amongst call centre employees on the basis of their employment type. **Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.**

Similarly, there are significant differences between employment type and burnout amongst call centre employees. **Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.**

Overman (1993 cited in Fourie & Visser, 2001) states that shift work is more than a schedule for the worker. It becomes a life-style and consequently influences the worker's productivity, health, social and domestic life and also causes fatigue. Colquhoun and Rutenfranz (1980 Fourie & Visser, 2001) concluded that this difficulty in adapting results in stress that is not related to the work itself, but arises

from the strain of complying with the unnatural patterns of activities and sleep that shift work demands.

Fourie and Visser (2001) conducted a study amongst a sample of 67 female partners of emergency shift workers. The study investigated the influence of shift work on the social and domestic life of the partner. The results suggest that the structuring of shift systems within the emergency services should be reconsidered, because it is clear that abnormal working hours, sleep disturbances and fatigue that workers experience as a result of working shifts, influence work performance and also the social and domestic life of the worker (Waterhouse, Folkard & Minors, 1992 cited in Fourie & Visser, 2001).



Kandolin (1993) analysed burnout and psychological stress of nurses in two- and three-shift work amongst 124 mental health nurses and 162 nurses of mentally handicapped persons; half of the nurses were women. Fifty-two per cent were in three-shift work and the other half worked in two shifts. Female nurses in three-shift work reported more stress symptoms and had ceased to enjoy their work more often than women in two-shift work. Psychological fatigue and hardening were not dependent on the shift system. Male nurses experienced the same amount of burnout and stress in two- and three-shift work. Besides shift work, occupational demands and passive stress coping strategies contributed to the experience of burnout and stress. However, family demands did not correlate with burnout of the nurses.

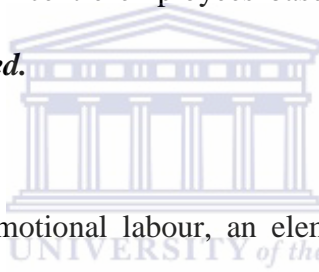
5.2.2.1 HYPOTHESIS 3:

There is a significant difference in emotional labour between call centre employees based on their biographical characteristics (namely; gender, tenure and employment type).

Due to the paucity in literature on emotional labour and gender in call centre employees, reference will also be made to other 'helping service' professions.

5.2.2.1.1 GENDER

The results of the current research indicate there is a significant difference in emotional labour amongst call centre employees based on gender. ***Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.***

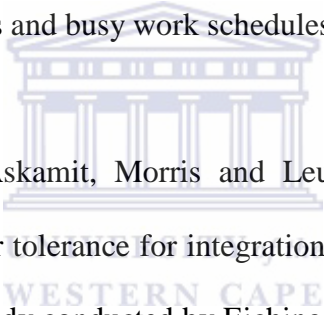


Many occupations involve emotional labour, an element of work which has been described as relevant to the experience of work related stress (Zapf et al., 1999; Zapf, 2002) in that all these job roles require either face to face or voice to voice interaction with clients and in each of these occupations the emotions that the employees are required to display as part of their job have to follow strict rules. According to Lewig and Dollard (2003), certain occupations such as (ambulance, teachers, social services, customer services – call centres, prison officers and police) are more likely to involve an emotional element of work suggesting that employees in these occupations are likely to be more vulnerable to stress than occupations that do not require emotional displays.

According to Belt et al., 1999 cited in Deery et al., 2002) women are said to be preferred by management for call centre employment for a variety of reasons. It has

been suggested that they are more sociable and empathetic and therefore have better communication skills than men. Women are also said to be more intuitive and tolerant and have stronger team working skills. This would suggest that women will suffer less negative effects from interactive service work than men.

Van der Linde, Van der Westhuizen and Wissing (1999) found that many female teachers experience the changes in the South African educational system as traumatic. According to Pearlin (1989) the greater vulnerability to stress may be attributable to social roles that reflect the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities and self-regard. Nevertheless, the adjustments associated with these changes, together with the female teachers' normal duties and busy work schedules, result in continuous stress.



Some researchers such as Askamit, Morris and Leunberger (1987) indicate that female teachers have a greater tolerance for integration and for special needs persons than do male teachers. In a study conducted by Eichinger (2000) on job stress and job satisfaction amongst a sample of 142 special education teachers, the results from this study indicate that females reported more stress relative to males.

In a similar study conducted by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978, cited in McEwen & Thompson, 1997) found that female teachers appeared to find pupil misbehaviour the greatest source of stress, and men reported greater stress in coping with administrative work.

Wharton (1993 cited in Deery et al., 2002) on the other hand found no evidence to indicate that gender was associated with greater levels of emotional fatigue among workers performing emotional labour.

5.2.2.1.2 TENURE

The result of the current research indicates there is a significant difference in emotional labour amongst call centre employees based on tenure. **Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.**

A common view with regards to length of service is that “Separation is more likely to occur in the early weeks of employment when there is little to hold the new entrant to the working group.” (van der Merwe & Miller, 1988, p. 75). Length of service can provide a “useful measure of the development of adjustment to the work situation. It was found that labour turnover was a function of this developing relationship over time with the result that there were more leavers in the earlier stages of employment” (Nel, 1973, p. 117).

5.2.2.1.3 EMPLOYMENT TYPE

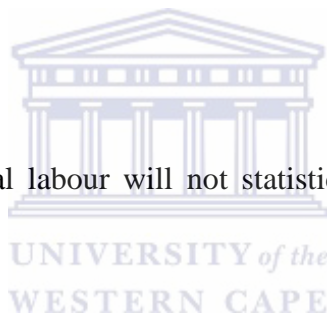
The results of the current study indicates that there is no significant difference in emotional labour amongst call centre employees based on employment type. **Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted.**

Zeytinoglu, Denton, Davies and Plenderleith (2008) examined the associations between casualized (non-permanent contracts, part-time or casual hours, involuntary

hours, on-call work, split shifts, pay per visit and hourly pay with variable hours) employment and turnover intention in home care workers amongst 991 visiting nurses, therapists and home support workers in a medium-sized city in Ontario, Canada. Results show that, controlling for many other factors, casual hours, perceived employment insecurity and labour market insecurity are positively associated with home care workers' turnover intention, however, on-call work is negatively associated with home care workers' turnover intention. Non-permanent contract, part-time hours, involuntary hours, split shifts, and non-salaried pay are features of the market-modelled home care work environment and therefore may not be associated with turnover intention.

5.2.2.1 HYPOTHESIS 4:

Stress, burnout and emotional labour will not statistically significantly explain the variance in intention to leave.



The results of the current study indicate that the multiple R-value is 0.37651, as indicated by Multiple R. The R-Squared value of 0.35097 indicates that approximately 35% of the variance in turnover intentions can be accounted for by these three variables. The F-statistic of 5.325214 is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Hence, it may be concluded that the three variables of stress, burnout and emotional labour significantly explain 35% of the variance in turnover intentions.

Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

According to Cherniss (1980); Cordes and Dougherty (1993); Maslach and Leiter (1997) and Leiter and Maslach (1988) there is a definite relationship between occupational stressors and burnout, as stress is the precursor to burnout.

According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), organisational stressors can be divided into two groups, namely job demands and a lack of job resources. Leiter and Maslach (1988) also considered job demands and resources as potential sources of organisational stress. Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli's (2003) examined the predictive validity of the job demands – resources (JD –R) model for self-reported absenteeism and turnover intentions amongst a sample study of 477 employees working in the call centre of a Dutch telecom company. Results revealed that health problems did not act as a pure mediator. Job demands (that is, work overload, changes in the task, emotional demands, and computer problems) were the most important predictors of call centre employees' levels of exhaustion and RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) and job resources (that is, social support by colleagues, supervisory coaching, performance feedback, and time control) were unique predictors of commitment and dedication, and indirectly of turnover intentions. Because the correlational analysis revealed that job demands were not significantly related to the two absenteeism measures, exhaustion and RSI did not act as pure mediators. Instead, they seem to act as so-called conditional variables: If job demands lead to health problems, then absenteeism may follow. In contrast, all job resources were significantly related to turnover intentions, which means that involvement (commitment and dedication) acted as a pure mediator between job resources and turnover intentions.

Although several antecedents for burnout exist, many researchers argue that one of the major contributors to burnout is the work environment and certain characteristics of the job (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998 cited in Koekemoer & Mostert, 2006). Koekemoer and Mostert (2006) conducted a study amongst a sample of 200 nurses working in hospitals in the Johannesburg, Klerksdorp, Krugersdorp, Potchefstroom and Pretoria areas. The results suggested that high job demands and specifically high pressure (for example, working very fast, working very hard, intense concentration for long periods of time, the amount of work exceeding the capacity of employees) contribute to higher exhaustion levels of nurses. Emotional demands and time-related demands were statistically significantly related to exhaustion, and nurse-specific demands were practically significantly (medium effect) related to exhaustion. Time related demands (working overtime, emergency hours, irregular hours or socially undesirable hours) and nurse-specific demands (experiencing insults from patients, families and doctors, dealing with difficult patients, experiencing language and communication barriers with patients) also predicted exhaustion independently (when job resources were not included in the regression analysis). Therefore, these two demands are also associated with exhaustion in the absence of job resources, such as autonomy, role clarity and support.

Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, Wecking and Moltzen (2006) conducted two studies amongst call centre employees in which the relationships of objective working conditions (example, inbound versus outbound work), subjective measures of motivating potential of work, and organisational identification were analysed. Job satisfaction, turnover intentions, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), health

complaints, and burnout were assessed as indicators of the employees' work motivation and well-being. In both studies it was found that objective working conditions substantially correlated with subjective measures of work motivation. Moreover, employees experiencing a high motivating potential at work reported more OCB, higher job satisfaction, and less turnover intentions. As hypothesised by the researchers, organisational identification was a further independent predictor of job satisfaction, turnover intentions, OCB, and well-being.

Visser and Rothmann (2003) examined whether affective commitment mediated the relationship between burnout and turnover intention. The results showed that burnout was statistically significantly related to affective commitment. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that affective commitment partially mediated the relationship between burnout and turnover intention. The result implied that burnout has a direct effect on turnover intentions. However, burnout also affected turnover intentions indirectly through its effect on affective organisational commitment. Therefore, turnover intentions can be better understood by considering burnout and affective organisational commitment (Visser & Rothmann, 2003).

Fisher, Milner and Chandraprakash (2007) conducted a study consisting of a random sample of call centre employees drawn from the population of employees in a corporate call centre of a major telecommunications organisation in South Africa. They investigated the relationship between the organisational climate developed under the call centre working conditions and concomitant factors of job satisfaction and job-related tension. The case study further looked at its target for analysis, the score profiles of call centre employees' experiences of work as captured on these key

variables and reports on the main features that contribute to the positive and negative experiences of work. Findings indicated that more insight is gained about the work experiences of these call centre employees from the piecemeal analysis of these profiles than is gained solely through an inspection of summary statistics, such as means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients.

In Wharton's (1993 cited in Deery et al., 2002) pioneering study of frontline service work, it was found that jobs involving emotional labour did not have uniformly negative consequences and that the incidence of emotional exhaustion was influenced by a range of work related factors (such as, job autonomy, opportunities for self-monitoring, length of tenure and working hours).

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Although the sample size (N = 163 call centre employees) of the current study is considered appropriate, for future research studies a larger group of respondents could be considered.
- The current research utilised a non-probability sampling method in the form of convenience sampling, hence, certain groups may have been under-presented. Therefore for future research it is recommended that a stratified random sample be adopted which would enable greater rigour and strive for greater precision and control with respect to the sample.
- The research made use of self-report measures which is subject to response biases. Participants might have responded to questions in socially appropriate ways. Therefore for future research interviews can also be conducted with the call centre employees.

- The current study did not take both departments (that is, inbound and outbound) into consideration due to time constraints, the study was only conducted in the retail collection/outbound department of the call centre. Hence, the results of the current study cannot be generalized. Therefore it is recommended that more than one retail organisation be used and not only confined to the Western Cape, so that the study can be generalized to call centre employees within a collection/inbound call centre at any organisation in South Africa.
- The majority of the respondents in this research were females which constituted 60% of the sample and the remaining (40%) were male. Therefore it is recommended that future research use a sample that is comprised of an equal percentage of males and females.
- This current study used the Maslach Burnout Inventory Questionnaire (MBI) of Maslach and Jackson (1981) due to easy access and availability of the questionnaire. Future research studies could use the more recent Maslach Burnout Inventory questionnaire (MBI).
- There is limited literature on stress, burnout, emotional labour and intention to leave amongst call centre employees within the South African context, therefore reference was made to other service professions/organisations as well.

5.4 RECOMMENDATION FOR THE ORGANISATION

- In order to facilitate challenging and interesting work; to provide employees with the opportunity to vary their work; and to do other types of tasks, it is recommended that the work of the call centre representatives be redesigned

according to sound principles of job design and job enrichment to create meaningful tasks with different levels of skill and variety built into the work. (Frenkel et al., 1998 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2008; Zapft et al., 2003 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2008).

- In order to reduce the development of burnout, it is recommended that management allow call centre representatives more time with their customers on the phone (increase average handling time) to reduce the perception of work overload in the form of time pressure (Deery et al., 2002 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2008).
- It is important that call centre representatives gain experience in different departments of the call centre, therefore it is recommended that a career cycle of two years on the phone and one year off the phone could be tried which may prove beneficial for the reduction of burnout and turnover intentions (Visser & Rothmann, 2008).
- Practical interventions should be implemented at the call centre to reduce stress amongst the call centre employees, and to focus on developing the selection of effective coping strategies. Interventions could include: stress management and coping programmes as well as wellness programmes which focuses on employees total physical and mental condition, in this way organisations are able to consistently monitor employees' conditions.
- Management can also use effective communications as a mean to shape employee perceptions regarding their interpretation of organisational demands, threats or opportunities (Robbins, 2001).
- Organisations should focus on maintaining moderate levels of stress, which are associated with peak employee performance. It is recommended that

monthly staff meetings be held, where employee knowledge of performance relative to others is provided, which would identify top performers and techniques others could use to improve performance (Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004).

- The organisation needs to train their team managers on how to handle and deal with stressful situations, so that they are able to assist the call centre employees in dealing with such a situation.

5.5 CONCLUSION

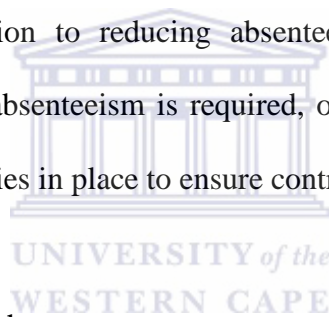
The aim of this research was primarily to determine the relationship between stress, burnout, emotional labour and intention to leave amongst call centre employees. The results emanating from this research indicate that there is a significant relationship between certain factors that were measured amongst a sample of call centre employees who participated in this study. All the relationships indicate that higher levels of stress, higher levels of burnout and higher levels of emotional labour are likely to translate into an elevation to the extent to which employees may wish to leave the organisation.

However, there was no significant difference in tenure and burnout as well as no significant difference in emotional labour based on employment type.

Despite stereotypical perceptions, the work of call centre employees is neither simple nor undemanding. Therefore, researchers have started to analyse the various factors that make call centre work stressful (Dormann & Zijlstra, 2003; Holman, 2003). Focused on the findings of the current study it can be deduced that stress is a

prominent factor within the call centre because of the nature of the environment. The evidence indicates that stress can be either a positive or negative influence on employees' performance. For many individuals, low to moderate amounts of stress enable them to perform their jobs better, by increasing their work intensity, alertness, and ability to react. However, high levels of stress, or even a moderate amount sustained over a long period of time, eventually take its toll and performance declines. Even though low to moderate levels of stress may improve job performance, employees find stress dissatisfying (Robbins, 2001).

According to Bielous (1993) and Martocchio (1994), organisations need to ensure they record adequate attention to reducing absenteeism and turnover. Stringent monitoring of the extent of absenteeism is required, organisations therefore need to ensure they have proper policies in place to ensure control thereof.



Various studies have shown that turnover rates are particularly high in call centres, illustrating that working in call centres is not always as nice as people would think. Moreover, it undermines the strategic goal of cost reduction because expenditures for training new employees increase. It is not the workload, pressure, and stress that make call centre jobs problematic, but rather results point in the direction that in order to overcome problems with turnover, call centre jobs should be enriched with complexity, control, and variety (Dormann & Zijlstra, 2003).

Since from an employer's perspective, call centres represent an efficient means to improve organisations' economic performance, the relative number of jobs in call centres (or customer-contact centres) will continue to rise for years. However, almost

all researchers acknowledge that much has to be done until such jobs become attractive and motivating, with no or little effects on ill-health, with development opportunities, and with good performance from the viewpoint of the customer (Dormann & Zijlstra, 2003). Therefore as the demand for call centre staff grows, it will be the organisations that provide healthy work environments that attract and retain the most valuable workers (Lewig & Dollard, 2003).



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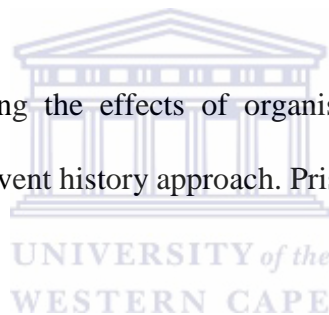
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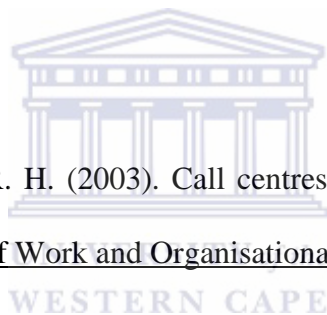
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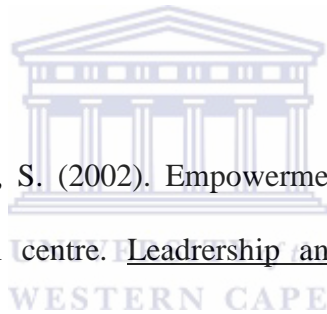
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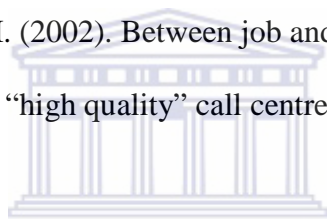
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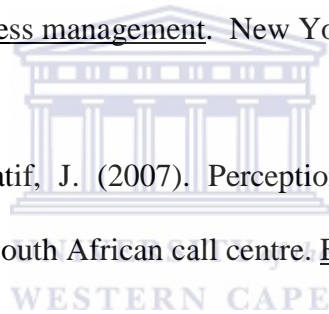
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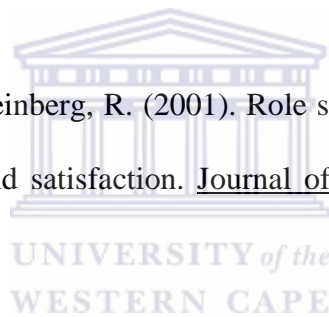
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