

https://dspace.org/

Quality of work life and career change among online technical advisors

Parshotam, Anusha

2008-09-26T11:32:21Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/5696

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND CAREER CHANGE AMONG ONLINE TECHNICAL ADVISORS

Anusha Parshotam

2005

This research dissertation was submitted to the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts (Industrial Psychology) by Coursework and Research Report.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Masters) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

_____

ANUSHA PARSHOTAM

24 November 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to the following people:

- Prof. James Fisher for his supervision
- My family and friends for their exceptional support and belief in me
- My brother for his guidance and direction
- To all the technical advisors for participating in the study, as well as the managers for taking the time and effort to assist me.

ABSTRACT

There is currently a phenomenon of young people changing jobs in our country. This research looks at the reasons why mechanics leave the workshop environment to pursue a career as a technical advisor in the call centre. The technical advisors all make the transition at a particular stage in their lives and this will be looked at in terms of Super's (1980) developmental theory, with a particular focus on the stage of establishment. The dissertation takes the reader on a journey through the lives of five technical advisors at a particular organisation, and compares and contrasts the two work environments and the quality of work life associated with both. The study will also focus on stress that they experience while making the transition from mechanic to technical advisor and how this impacts on their work and personal lives. The study was exploratory in nature and was investigated through the qualitative method of interviewing.

CONTENTS

PART ONE: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 1: Literature Review 7

- Introduction 7
- Quality of Work life 9
- Career Change 12
    - Super's Self-Concept developmental Theory 14
    - Super's Life Stages 16
    - Life Career Rainbow 17

Chapter 2: Context and Environment 19

- Mechanical Trade Background 19
- The Call Centre 22
- Stress 24
    - Technostress 26
    - Stress in the Call Centre Environment 28

- Rationale 30
- Aims and Research Questions 31

PART TWO: PRESENT RESEARCH

Chapter 3: Methodology 33

- Measuring Instruments 33
- Research Design 34

- Procedure and Ethical Considerations 36
- Sample 38
- Data Analysis 39

Chapter 4: Results 42

Chapter 5: Discussion 55

- Implication of Research 61
- Limitations 62
- Conclusion 62

References 64

Appendices 70

PART ONE: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Online technical call centres are organisations that are involved in managed maintenance and fleet management. The particular technical call centre, relevant to the present study, combines the aspects of the mechanical workshop services with those of a call centre and creates a unique environment for providing fleet services and managed maintenance for vehicles that belong to organisations and the government.

Due to advanced technology and the demanding needs of the customers, organisations have turned to the use of call centres to assist them to provide a good service at a reduced cost. The type of service that they provide is quick and efficient and tries to aim at customer satisfaction in "real-time" (Cooper, 1999). Much research has been conducted on call centres and the nature of the call centre environment (Adorno, 1999). The studies have investigated physical and emotional exhaustion, performance management systems and the impact of it on the individual, turnover of staff and stress in the call centre.

The current study intends to assess the unique environment of a technical call centre, where employees are required to answer calls relating to vehicle repairs and maintenance. The call centre is distinctive in that it combines a call centre and the skills that are required in a mechanical workshop.

There is little evidence of similar research and therefore there is a need for further research in the South African context. This study will attempt to provide further insight into this unique environment within the framework of such an organisation. The study will focus on the reasons why the mechanics have left the workshop environment to pursue a career in a more corporate setting. To become a technical advisor, one must have been a mechanic, as the same technical knowledge is required to perform the job. There is already a phenomenon of young people changing jobs and the study will focus on the transition which takes place at a particular time in their lives and the reasons for the career change will be looked at in terms of Super's (1980) developmental theory. Focus will also be placed on the stress that they experience while making the transition and how this impacts not only on their work life, but also on their personal lives.

The first part, literature relating to quality of work and career change will be discussed, with particular focus on Super's (1980) developmental theory. The second chapter will look at the context of the mechanical workshop and the call centre. Stress within the two environments will also be highlighted as the technical advisors have developed in a certain way in the workshop and then experience different forms of stress in the call centre. The second part will present the methodology used in this study with specific reference to the measuring instruments, research design and the sample. The results obtained during the interviews will be discussed on Chapter four, and a discussion and interpretation of the results will follow in Chapter five.

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

Although there is no formal definition of quality of work life (QWL), industrial psychologists and management scholars agree in general that QWL is a construct that deals with the well-being of employees (Danna and Griffin, 1999). One might argue at this point that QWL is the same as job satisfaction, however it has been stated that QWL differs from job satisfaction in that job satisfaction is construed as one of the many outcomes of QWL (Greenhaus, Bedian and Mossholder, 1987). It was also stated that QWL does not only affect job satisfaction but also satisfaction in other life domains such as family life, leisure life, social life, financial life and so on. Therefore, there is evidence to say that the focus of QWL goes beyond job satisfaction by encompassing the effect in non-work life domains, and satisfaction with overall life, personal happiness, and subjective well-being.

Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel and Lee (2001) stated that need satisfaction resulting from workplace experiences contributed to job satisfaction and satisfaction in other life domains. Satisfaction in the most important life domains, for example work, family, home or leisure, contributes directly to satisfaction with overall life. Taking the above into consideration, QWL can be defined as, “employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace (Sirgy et al., 2001: 242).

QWL is important as there is evidence showing that a happy employee is a productive, dedicated and loyal employee (Greenhaus et al., 1987). Research by Danna and Griffin (1999) shows that the consequences of low levels of health and well-being include absenteeism, reduced productivity and efficiency, reduced service

quality, etc. Therefore, it can be argued that QWL may have a significant impact on employee behaviour, such as job satisfaction, performance, intention to quit, and turnover, to name a few.

Loscocco and Roschelle (1991) suggest that there are two dominant theoretical approaches in the QWL literature, namely need satisfaction and spillover. In the original report to be reported in a later chapter of the research report, QWL will be based on these two theoretical perspectives.

Sirgy et al. (2001) developed a measure of QWL based on the two perspectives. It was stated that the need satisfaction approach to QWL is based on need satisfaction models developed by theorists such as Maslow (1954), McClelland (1961), Herzberg (1966) and Alderfer (1972). The underlying concept of this approach is that people have basic needs which they try to fulfil through work (Loscocco and Roschelle, 1991). It can thus be said that employees derive satisfaction from their jobs to the extent that their jobs meet their basic needs. The basic needs are derived from Porter's (1961) Need Satisfaction Questionnaire, which was used to assess: (a) the level of employee needs that are pursued on the job, (b) the level of organisational resources relevant to the needs experienced by the employee, and (c) the congruence between a person's needs and organisational resources. The needs are based also on Maslow's hierarchy and include: (a) survival needs, (b) security needs, (c) pay, (d) social needs, (e) interpersonal interactions (friendships), (f) membership and being-in-the-know, (g) ego needs, (h) need for self-esteem, (i) autonomy, and (j) self-actualisation.

The spillover approach to QWL supposes that satisfaction in one area of life may influence satisfaction in another (Crouter, 1984). For example, satisfaction in one's job may influence satisfaction in other life domains such as family, leisure, social, health, financial, etc. Crouter (1984) reports that there are two types of spillover, horizontal and vertical. Horizontal spillover is the simpler of the two, in that feelings in one life domain will influence a neighbouring domain. For example, job satisfaction may influence satisfaction in the family domain. Vertical satisfaction is based on the notion of hierarchy, where people organise their domains in terms of importance or worth in their minds. At the top of the hierarchy is the most important domain, namely overall life. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction within a domain will spillover to the most important domain thus affecting overall life satisfaction. A concept related to spillover is compensation, which refers to the balance of the life domains (Leiter and Durup, 1996). For example, if a person is highly dissatisfied with his or her marriage, he or she may choose to become more involved in social activities at work and derive pleasure from those activities. Doing so overcomes the deficiency in satisfaction experienced in the family domain.

Sirgy et al. (2001) hypothesised that satisfaction in a particular life domain is directly influenced by QWL because the work domain plays a direct role in satisfying needs pertaining to that life domain. There were three samples made up from two universities and one accounting organisation. The statistical results in their study showed some support for the hypothesis, however it was not very high. This could be because quality of work life takes on different meanings for different segments of the workforce. Khan (2003) reports that Levine, Taylor and Davis (1984) suggested that employers and employees should participate in defining quality of work life and then

factors that contribute to a framework for understanding the concept specific to the population are explored.

For the purposes of this study, quality of work life is important as the focus is on a particular stage in the technical advisors' life, where there is major transition. Therefore the following section will highlight career change (transition) and focus on the Super's life that is relevant to the technical advisors.

CAREER CHANGE

The term career not only describes the work one does, such as being a psychologist, mechanic or homemaker, it may also refer to the trajectory through which adult lives move (Thomas, 2002). It is something of a surprise that career has not always had this meaning, changing to fit different social and economic circumstances. An important aspect to consider is whether the nature of career is changing, and with it, the way people work and the way in which they define themselves.

Peering into a crystal ball is inherently a risky business. Some predictions look absurd just a few years later, like flying cars predicted to be the means of transport in 2000. Thomas (2002) reported that predicting social trends is in one way even more difficult that predicting technological change, because perturbations in any walk of life may have repercussions in all other aspects. The prediction problem is somewhat eased, however by the simple fact that in a diverse and global society, almost any prediction will describe the behaviour of at least some people, at least some of the time.

Much has been written about the more tangible psychological benefits of employment to the individual. For example, work as an important social network; the regulation of the day and establishment of routines; a source of self-esteem; the sense of autonomy; and a contributor to the establishment of and definition of an adult identity, thus being a very significant component of the transition from adolescence to mature adulthood (Sonnenberg, 1997). In this sense, a career is seen to have a positive impact on people in terms of facilitating growth and development of the personality. However, this is obviously a generalisation and it is important to recognise that individuals differ and hence there may be individuals for whom a career may not be positive. It may be fair to say, however, that work generally presents a hope of personal development, reward, adjustment, and regulation (Sonnenberg, 1997).

An early definition of careers from the Oxford Dictionary is a person's course or progress through life. This brings in the notion that careers only include those aspects of work in which there is progress or advancement in the world (Woodd, 2000). Again, what is progress or advancement and is a mechanic's decision to work as a technical advisor seen as progress? It depends very much, on how the person views success, his or her beliefs and values, which may not be based on power or pay. Hence, there are many different ways of looking at careers and the changing of careers, depending on different viewpoints, which may include sociological, anthropological, economic, political, historical, geographical or psychological perspectives (Woodd, 2000).

The South African association of the term 'career' with occupational advancement in an organisation has also changed since the 1980's, due to the fact that organisations

now have difficulty in providing long-term employment to their employees due to the insecure and competitive nature of the market. This has also resulted in widespread unemployment. As a result of this, many South Africans have turned to working from home or on a contractual basis instead of working permanently in the formal work sector. Stead and Watson (1999) therefore suggests that the term career should be used to reflect upon the meaning of work as consisting of both one's activities inside and outside of the employment context in relation to one's life roles across the lifespan.

For the purposes of this study, a developmental theory of career choice will be looked at, namely that of Donald Super, as it demonstrates a way in which career development is said to progress over a lifespan. This important concept will be returned to in the interpretation and discussion of the results found in the present study.

Super's Self-Concept Developmental Theory

Donald Super views career development as a lifelong process, which is comprised of five life stages, during which specific career choices are made (Super, 1980). Super notes that individuals require certain skills and need to attain a certain level of career maturity and adaptability in order to plan effectively for their career and make effective career choices. According to Super, career maturity refers to an individual's preparation and readiness to make a career choice, while adaptability refers to their ability to master developmental tasks and interact with their environment (Langley in Stead and Watson, 1999).

Super's theory focuses upon the intrapersonal aspects of the individual, which may include one's values, interests, personality and most importantly, what Super refers to as one's self-concept. Individuals are said to go through a process whereby they develop their own views of the attributes that they believe they possess. Super refers to this process as the development of one's self-concept and notes that these attributes may include one's "abilities, personality traits, needs, interests and values" (Greenhaus, 1987: 96). The process of attaining one's self-concept involves the individual interacting with their environment and their roles in the environment, which may include among others, the role of a student, worker, family member or friend (Schreuder and Theron, 1997).

The individual creates a synthesis or compromise between their self-concept and aspects of reality, which may include "social, economic and cultural factors" (Super and Bohn in Schreuder and Theron, 1997: 56). An individual's self-concept may be positive or negative and is expected to change over time along with the changing environment. The notion of the self-concept plays a central role in Super's theory of occupational choice in that individuals are said to "develop a self-concept, develop images or beliefs about a series of occupations, and take steps to enter the occupation that is most compatible with their self-concept" (Greenhaus, 1987: 96).

Super notes that it is important to integrate an individual with their social context, and thus takes concepts such as an individual's life roles and cultural context into consideration when discussing career development (Super, 1980). The roles that an individual takes on, the cultural context, in which they function as well as their experience with interpersonal relationships with others, are expected to change

throughout their lifespan and are therefore important factors to consider when discussing the process of career development.

Super's Life Stages

Super's theory describes five main life stages, namely: - growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. While Super's theory differentiates these stages from one another, he notes that individuals do not always develop uniformly and as such, the ages given for each stage are both approximated and flexible. Schreuder and Theron (1997) demonstrate this by noting that the stage of exploration, which usually takes place in the period of adolescence, may be repeated in the later stages of one's life. An individual going through the stage of retirement may therefore go through exploration while trying out new activities and roles. In this case "the underlying principle of exploration remains the same, but manifests in different forms in different stages" (Schreuder and Theron, 1997: 58). One of the stages that is applicable in terms of age and life stage to technical advisors within a call centre is Establishment.

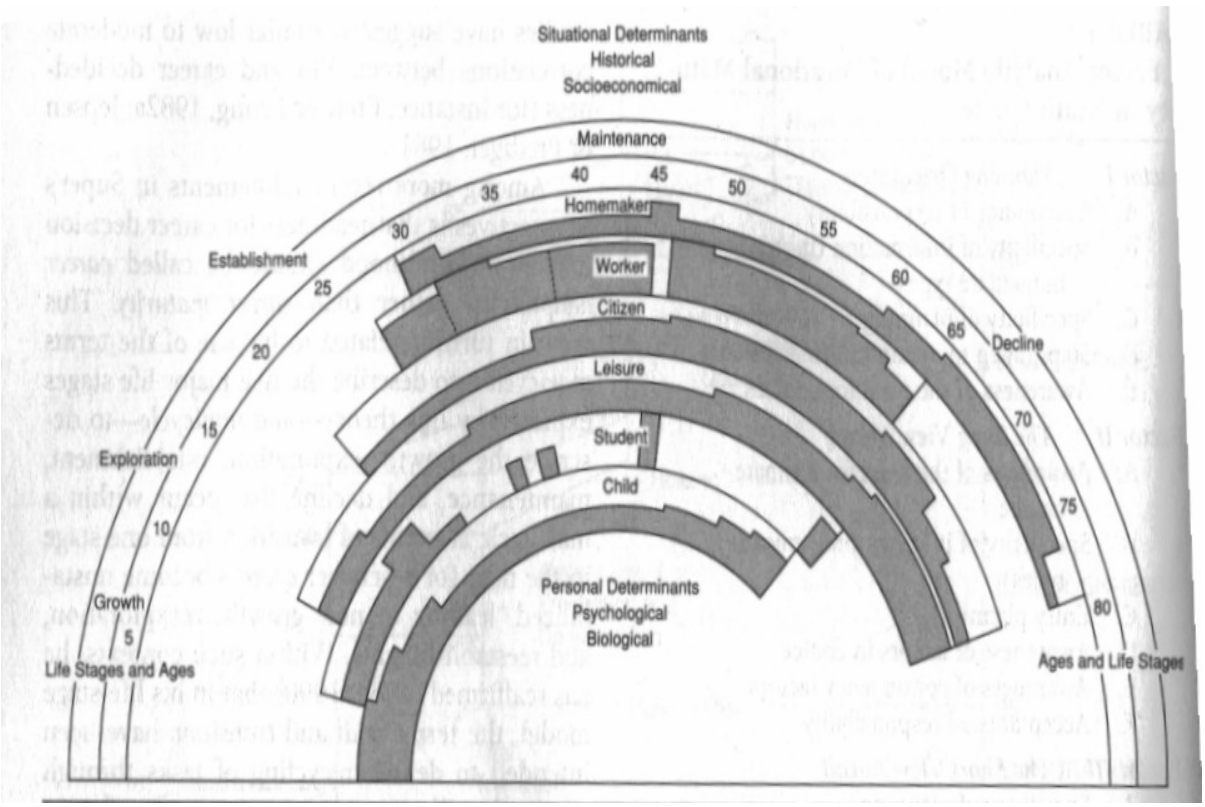
Establishment (early adulthood, around age 25-45)

This stage involves a period of trial in the individual's late 20's, which is followed by a period of stabilisation in their 30's and early 40's. As the name implies, this stage relates to early encounters within actual working experiences. The trial period takes place before a final career choice is made and usually involves a series of career changes. This may take place by trial and error, and the individual tries to ascertain whether decisions and choices that were made during the previous stage of exploration, were correct. However, this changes with the onset of stabilisation, where

the individual tends to prioritise security and advancement in the workplace. As he or she gains experience and proficiency, the individual enters the phase of stabilisation. Aspects of the person's occupation are brought into the self concept and the occupational choice is accepted as the one that will satisfy the individual's needs. Unsuccessful stabilisation is often seen to result in some form of frustration, which is likely to result in stagnation or change. Super notes that individuals who thrive on change often resist stabilisation and continue to go through trial periods throughout their careers (Schreuder and Theron, 1997).

The Life-Career Rainbow

Super makes use of the Life-Career Rainbow to portray his vision of the career as a series of life stages that take place through the course of one's total life span (Schreuder and Theron, 1997). The Life-Career Rainbow is made up of outer and inner bands, which as the name suggests, form the shape of a rainbow. The two outer bands represent Super's five life stages and the approximate ages at which they are expected to occur. The inner bands, on the other hand, represent the six life roles that the individual may adopt throughout the period of their life and include that of homemaker, worker, citizen, leisurite, student and child (Schreuder and Theron, 1997). Super notes that both the life roles that individuals may take on, and the stages in which they take place vary from person to person, and as such, what may be most significant for one individual may be least significant for another. The Life-Career Rainbow has been used as an assessment tool to determine the significance of the individual's given roles for both the present and the future (Schreuder and Theron, 1997).



Super's Life-Career Model (Herr and Cramer, 1996)

Super's theory of self concept and stages of development will be referred to during the discussion of the results as it forms a key part of the study as it relates to the specific time in the lives of the technical advisors.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT

The following chapter is a continuation of the literature review, with the focus on the motor industry that the technical advisors came from and the call centre, which they have moved to. Stress will also be discussed in this section.

MECHANICAL TRADE BACKGROUND

South Africa represents the biggest domestic market for vehicles in Africa and accounts for some 80% of the continent's production. South Africa's population of 45 million and a growing tourism industry still represent the continent's best growth prospects for increasing vehicle sales and aftermarket revenues. The ratio of people to vehicle in South Africa is 7:1 (The South African Automotive Yearbook, 2004).

This is a relatively high ratio, thereby increasing the number of motor mechanics required to maintain these vehicles. The work of a motor mechanic involves the maintenance and repair of motor cars, busses, trucks and other vehicles. Mechanics find faults and then depending on what is wrong with the vehicle, they select the method they will use to repair the vehicle. Some of their other duties include: adjust brakes, replace shock absorbers, solder leaks in the radiator, and replace oil, oil filters and air filters. Mechanical aptitude is very important and motor mechanics should also be able to work skillfully with their hands.

Motor mechanics start their careers by studying a National Technical Certificate on three different levels. The subjects that are studied include motor trade theory, mathematics, engineering science, engineering drawing and practical training. Once they have completed their N2 level, the motor mechanic has to arrange for an

apprenticeship under the supervision of an experienced artisan. The apprenticeship lasts for three to four years and thereafter they are eligible to write the voluntary trade test to become a qualified tradesman.

The mechanics that were interviewed for the present study had all previously worked for a motor dealership. The type of environment in which they were based, was a workshop setting, where each mechanic would be assigned to a bay and would be responsible for vehicles in that specific bay. The type of work done is manual in nature and hands on. Most of the work is carried out using hand tools and in certain cases, specialised diagnostic (computer based) equipment is used. Mechanics work in informal settings; however adhere to strict hours in terms of lunch and tea breaks. No shift work is involved. Mechanics are not required to be formally dressed and wear personal protective gear (overalls and work boots), which are provided by the organisation.

The mechanics are involved in manual labour which can be hazardous at times, for example, they work directly under cars which are on hoists and should there be a fault with the hoist mechanism, the mechanic could find himself in a dangerous position. Also, their work involves lifting of heavy equipment and this causes strain on their bodies. Back strain is particularly common due to continuous bending over the bonnets of cars. The mechanics are also exposed to dangerous chemicals and other substances such as petrol, which is flammable. Also, oil spills can lead to accidents and slipping.

The mechanics do not necessarily work with strict allocated deadlines, but rather base their deadlines on the type of problems they attend to. Outcomes are not always seen the same day and may take up to a week to see the end result. The mechanic must have a good knowledge of the type of vehicle they are working on, however there are support networks available to them or they could refer problems to other more senior mechanics working alongside. The mechanic is ultimately responsible for the end product, however he is not constantly monitored or performance managed and can therefore rely on the expertise and help of others. The mechanic can also refer to workshop manuals to assist him with fault finding, and one is available for every type of vehicle. Therefore, most of the time, the mechanic may not be required to think on his feet and solve problems immediately.

While completing their apprenticeships, mechanics develop certain coping mechanisms for the workshop environment. They learn about heath and safety in the workshop environment, personal hygiene and cleanliness, as well as service levels. They also learn to deal with the stress and impact of the work on their personal lives. However all of this pertains to the workshop environment and for most of them, they have just entered the working world directly from technikon and this is all that they know. However, these coping mechanisms are not necessarily the same as those required in a call centre, and this, and more detail on call centres, will be discussed in the following section.

It is important to understand the background of the mechanical environment as it allows one to compare and contrast the two environments relating to quality of work life, stages of development and the actual transition between the two environments.

THE CALL CENTRE

The Call Centre industry has grown over the last twenty years and technological advances have enabled this industry to ensure fast and efficient services through information and communication systems (Lutrin, 2005).“A call centre is a central place where customer and other telephone calls are handled by an organisation, usually with some amount of computer automation,” (Call Centre Magazine, 1999: 3).

Typically, a call centre can handle a large volume of incoming calls at the same time. It would therefore seem that organisations want to increase their efficiency and are thus turning to call centres to achieve this goal. The call centre helps the organisation to achieve this goal by offering comprehensive telephonic support related to the organisation’s products and services to their customers and clients. With a strong technological basis, a call centre is able to offer more flexibility and thereby lower the costs of meeting the needs and expectations of customers. Although face-to-face contact is eliminated, emotional interaction is still involved (Bagnara, Gabrielli and Marti, 2000).

In South Africa, call centres can be found in many types of industries. They range from insurance, medical, banking, travel, and entertainment to emergency rescue organisations. Two main types of call centres are found in South Africa, namely: inbound and outbound call centres. Inbound call centres receive calls from customers, whereas outbound call centre agents are required to contact the customer (Lutrin, 2005). Inbound call centres generally handle customer problems, queries or requests from customers. This present study will focus on this type of call centre as the

technical advisors attend to calls from clients regarding repairs to vehicles and maintenance of the vehicles, which they refer to as managed maintenance.

In order for a call centre to operate effectively, it is reliant on technology. Some of the basic technological equipment used is the telephone, answering machines, computers for directories and email, faxes, and a mainframe system that records calls (Cunningham, 2001). The strategy of a call centre is to answer as many calls as possible while still maintaining quality of service. Therefore, it is imperative that the call centre employee fully understands the equipment used in the process of carrying out his or her job. The employee also needs to have a good understanding of the business strategy, the service that the organisation provides, and the different departments within the organisation and how work flows between the different departments (Cooper, 1999). Call Centre Magazine (1999) reports that the call centre employee needs to understand the operations of the call centre to perform well. The employee needs to be able to assist clients and customers by providing accurate information in a stipulated time. If the employee does not know how to help the person, they need to be able to direct the call to the correct department. Clients and customers come from various spheres and the employee needs to be able to deal with the diversity and anger or frustration that a client might be experiencing (Cooper, 1999).

From the above, it may be argued that call centres are effective in increasing an organisation's effectiveness, and that the jobs of call centre employees are designed around the technology. Technology therefore plays an important role in the employee's work life and could add to the pressures of the job. The following section

will focus on stress and particularly on stress in the call centre and technostress and these important concepts will be highlighted again during the discussion of the results found in the present study.

STRESS

To fully understand the concept of technostress, it is important to understand the concept of stress.

The word stress has many meanings in modern-day life. Aldwin (1994) states that the term stress is so commonly used that its meaning is considered straightforward and most of us know what it feels like to be 'stressed out'. However, this common usage creates a problem. Stress can have a variety of meanings, depending on individual and/ or cultural use. The study of stress is perplexed by these inconsistencies and confusing use of terms to define variables in the stress process (Lazarus, 1993). Aldwin (1994: 22) defines stress as, "referring to that quality of experience, produced through a person-environment transaction that through either over arousal or under arousal, results in psychological or physiological distress."

Lazarus (1993) defines stress as a deviation from norm or steady state. He identifies three kinds of psychological stress which are brought about by different preceding conditions within the environment and intrapersonal characteristic, resulting in different consequences. Harm is referred to as psychological damage that has already been done. Threat is the expected harm which has not yet occurred. Challenge is the result of difficult demands but ones we are able to master with the mobilizing of effective resources (Lazarus, 1993).

Stress is an inevitable feature of normal living. All living organisms encounter stress and crisis. In the total construct of a person's development as a living, growing, maturing and whole being, it is crucial to understand these two phenomena. Stress is undue pressure, either real or perceived, which plays a significant role in the progressive adaptations during growth and development. Stress is experienced by individuals within their frame of reference. It may be pressure to mature, to choose, to learn, to develop skills, to perform, to develop values, and to make judgments and decisions. Stressors create or enhance stress. They are any agent, condition, situation, goal, thought or behaviour which demands an increase in attention. Stress produces change which may be psychological or physiological, either healthy and useful or unhealthy and destructive to the individual. Mild stress is an integral part of growth and development of every individual (Aldwin, 1994).

There are many different sources of work stress offered in the literature. The one developed by De Frank and Cooper (1987), offers six different sources of stress: factors intrinsic to the job (introducing new technology); the role in the organisation (role conflict); relationships at work; career development; organisational structure and climate (management style); and home-work interface including spillover from one to another (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994). All these sources can in some way impact on the individual and the individual in turn can respond in two ways. One way, with individual symptoms such as irritability, depressed mood and raised blood pressure, and the other way, with organisational symptoms such as high absenteeism, poor quality control and high labour turnover (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994).

When looking at stressors, it is important to highlight spill-over hypothesis as it draws attention to the fact that individual factors that contribute are numerous and subject to the individual's situation (Robbins, Millett, Caiocoppe and Waters-Marsh, 1998). However, one thing that they have in common is that personal stressors may spillover into one's occupation and this may impact on performance and general ability. Focus also needs to be placed on factors that are specific to an individual. As an individual moves from one place to another or from one component of his or her life to another, he or she is likely to encounter new norms, demands, challenges, stresses, needs, decision-making processes, etc (Robbins, et al., 1998). Therefore, it is important to understand stress holistically as the stress experienced at work may impact on the personal life of a person.

The following sections will focus on technostress as this is a new type of stress for the mechanics as well as stress related to a call centre.

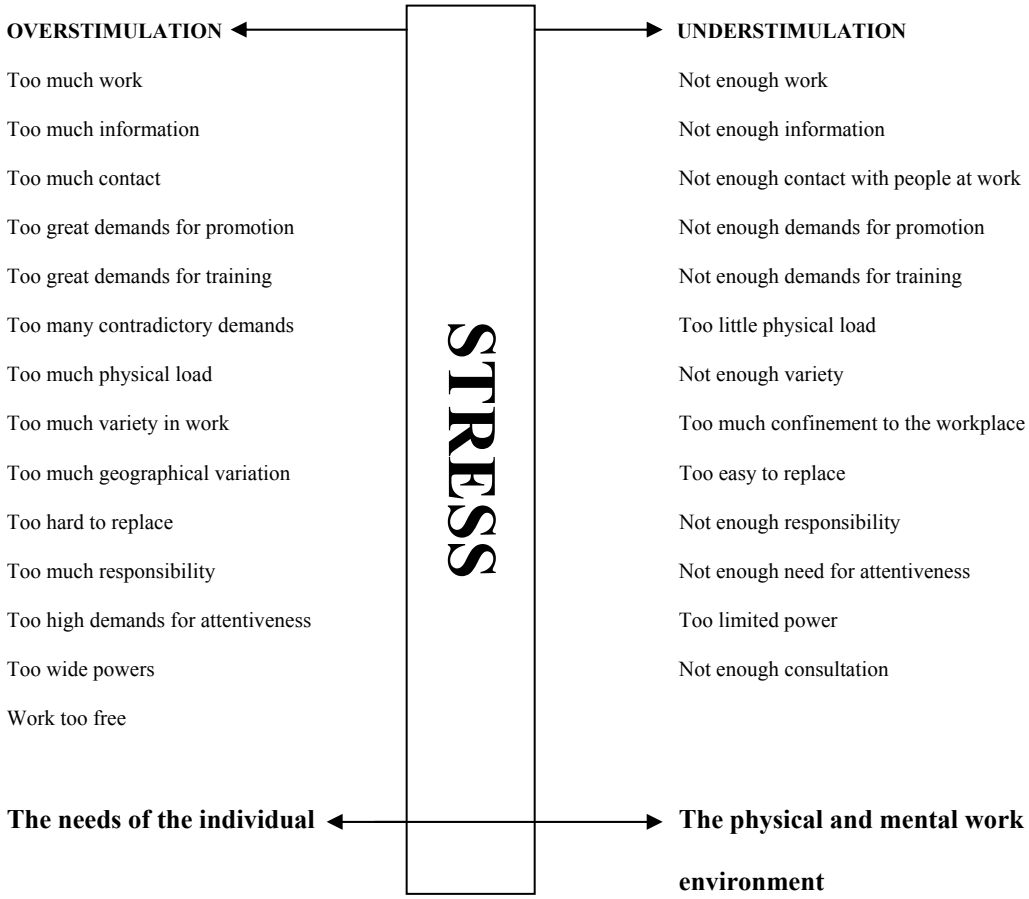
Technostress

Hudiburg (1989) describes technostress as those interactions with computer technology that people perceive to be stressful or a hassle. The first definition of technostress that was entered into the English language in 1983 was that of Brod (1984). Brod (1984) defined technostress as a 'disease' caused by the inability to interact with new computer technology in an appropriate way. Genco (2000) suggests that this definition is two-fold: on one side, people fail to accept new technology, and on the other, there are those who cannot imagine working without technology.

Weil and Rosen (1997) however reject the idea of technostress as a disease. They viewed technostress as referring to people's reactions to technology and how it influences people. Weil and Rosen (1997) also noted that technostress can be experienced directly and indirectly; directly through use of computers and other technological devices such as phones, faxes or photocopiers; and indirectly through people's attitudes such as invasion of privacy or fear of loss of job due to the inability to learn to use the technology. It is also stated that people have an inherent need to be in control of their environment and the introduction of technology often reduces this control (Weil and Rosen, 1997). They add that things that can become stressful regarding technology include system breakdowns, lack of privacy, and the effort required to learn to use technology. Therefore, they have made an important contribution through their study to establish technostress as a psychological concept. However, a limitation of this study lies in the methodology, as there were no details about the instruments given.

For the purposes of this study, technostress will not be investigated as a separate variable; however it is important as one of the more obvious changes in the work environment for a mechanic moving to a call centre, is technology. Khan (2003) noted that a significant association occurs between technostress and quality of work life, and therefore it is important to highlight this concept. This stems from Bradley's (1989) theory which provides the framework for understanding the link between stress and quality of work life. Bradley (1989) stated that technological developments impacts on the nature of work and the way organisations design their information processes and technology. It was also stated that when the needs of a person is not harmonious

with work environment, that person is likely to be under stimulated or over stimulated, and this will lead to stress. The diagram below illustrates this.



The psychosocial work environment and possibilities of over and under stimulation (Bradley, 1989)

However, as stated previously the mechanics also experience stress that inherent to a call centre and this will be looked at briefly.

Stress in the Call Centre environment

Adorno (1999) stated that the call centre environment is one that contributes to stress. The agents deal with high workloads, a lack of skill variety in terms of technological

tasks, continuous performance management, and an unpleasant working environment. The work that agents do is also seen as routine, monotonous and of a lower standard. The above mentioned factors combined with the demands for delivering 'real-time' service and lower pay, lead to higher levels of stress (Adorno, 1999).This further impacts on organisational issues such as higher absenteeism, reduced customer satisfaction, low job satisfaction and even depression in certain instances.

Research has also shown that other factors such as high turnover which leads to understaffing, unrealistic expectations in term of service delivery and management styles, all add to stress (Adorno, 1999). Employee dissatisfaction may also occur, where there is a mismatch between the incumbent and the job, in terms of skills required to perform the job, as well as goals and expectations. This also leads to higher levels of stress.

Call centre agents are required to have a great deal of emotional control as they are not allowed to display behaviour such as shouting, panicking or being abrupt on the phone. This can be strenuous at times, especially if the agent is under tremendous amount of stress from both work demands and personal demands. Adorno (1999) refers to emotional labour when describing the call centre agent's role. Emotional labour is where effort is required to display the type of behaviour that are valued by the organization and suppressing the expression of those performance behaviours which are less acceptable (Adorno, 1999). Therefore, while call centre agents are required to make quick decisions and solve problems for other people, they are expected to suppress any negative behaviour.

The technical advisors are exposed to this type of stress and need to develop coping mechanisms to deal with it. However, the coping mechanisms may not necessarily be the same as those that they have learnt previously and this could also be seen as stressful for them.

RATIONALE

Call centres are a relatively new phenomenon and a growing industry in the world (Cunningham, 2001). Another relatively new phenomenon is call centres that provide fleet management (managed maintenance) to organisations and the government. Previously organisations had to manage the maintenance of their vehicles in their fleet on their own and refer the problems to mechanics for advice and repairs. More recently, call centres that specialise in providing organisations with that maintenance have been established and organisations now have the option of outsourcing their fleet maintenance to such call centres. The technical advisors at the call centres provide various organisations with information pertaining to the maintenance of the fleet, as well as advice and monitoring of repairs.

Technical advisors are qualified mechanics who have previously worked at various dealer franchises. The mechanic then changes careers and enters a corporate call centre, where his or her technical knowledge and expertise with various motor vehicles allows him or her to provide clients with advice regarding the repair and maintenance of their vehicles. Their aim is to ensure cost effectiveness with vehicle maintenance for the client, as well as eradicating unnecessary or duplicated work.

There has been a paucity of research in this important field. There has been numerous research on quality of work life (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991; Crouter, 1984); however the technical advisors that will make up the sample of this study are unique in that they move from a trade industry to a corporate call centre. They do however stay within the same broader area of mechanics, but they change careers completely. This study will explore the reasons for the change in career based on Super's theory of career development. It will also explore the quality of work life associated with the change, and the impact of the work life on the other domains such as family, leisure, social, etc.

AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Quality of work life has been described as a construct that deals with the well-being of employees (Danna and Griffin, 1999). The proposed research is exploratory in nature and aims to describe why Mechanics change their careers to become Technical Advisors in a call centre. The Mechanics have their trade certificates and leave the workshop environment to pursue a new career within a call centre as Technical Advisors. Their new quality of work life will be explored, as well as the impact of their work life on the other domains, such as family, leisure, home, etc. The study will also focus on stress and will aim to compare and contrast the two work environments; that of the workshop and the call centre. The researcher is interested in quality of work life at a particular stage in life of the technical advisors, where a there is a major transition. There is already a phenomenon of young people changing jobs and this research will focus on a group of young people with the same qualifications and

background, who have experienced a transition to a completely different type of work environment.

The following research questions have emerged from the literature review:

1. What factors influenced the change in career?
2. How has the change affected their work patterns and work life?
3. How has the work life changes affected the other domains of their life?

PART TWO: PRESENT RESEARCH

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The following chapter will describe the research design of the study. It will also investigate the sampling procedures and a description of the sample will be given. The procedure used to gather the data will be looked at, and a description of the method, which was used to analyse the results.

Measuring Instruments

Data was gathered by means of an interview. The interview involved an informal interactive process and utilised open-ended questions. According to Kerlinger & Lee (2000), the inherent strength of the interview is that it minimizes the risk of misunderstanding and allows the researcher to probe certain issues by using alternative questions. The interview allowed the researcher to get an in-depth understanding of each technical advisor's individual life context. This was very important as there was a need to understand the detail behind why this young group of people made a drastic change in their lives.

Although the questions used in this study were standardised, alternative probing questions and prompts were used where appropriate (see appendix 4). The phenomenological interview began with an opening conversation aimed at creating a relaxed and trusting atmosphere. The participant then took a few moments to focus on their experiences, and then described the experience fully (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher was responsible for creating an atmosphere in which the participant was comfortable and responded honestly and comprehensively. There was a pilot

interview conducted to address the suitability and clarity of the interview questions. The pilot interview took place with another technical advisor who is no longer working at the organisation. The same questions that were asked during the interviews were posed to him and asked if anything was ambiguous or not clear (see appendix 4). He indicated that he clearly understood the questions and that the terms used were appropriate.

The interview is a commonly used method for data collection (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000), however it is not without its limitations. With regard to reliability and validity the interview technique itself is a source or potential subjectivity and bias, whereby the interviewer may reinforce certain 'desirable' responses in a subtle manner either by speech or by non-verbal behaviour (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Care was taken to avoid such bias and subjectivity by the researcher by asking open-ended questions and allowing the participant to talk freely and openly, with interrupting him, or directing what he said.

Research Design

A research design has been described as a plan of procedure to be used for the collection and analysis of data in order to evaluate a particular theoretical perspective (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). This research was exploratory in nature, therefore qualitative research was the recommended methodology for data gathering and analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

Qualitative research employs a non-numerical representation and data is collected for the purpose of describing and analysing human behaviour and functioning. Cassell and Symon (1994:3) stated the following about qualitative research,

> "The label qualitative methods has no precise meaning in any of the social sciences. It is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world."

This kind of research seeked to uncover the meaning of social situations, and aimed to explore the subjective point of view of the individual.

Qualitative research differs from quantitative methods in that qualitative research is frequently more interactive, intensive and the researcher is likely to form more of a social relationship with the organisational members, and therefore gain more insight into their understanding of their experiences (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

Qualitative research is advantageous, however it is not without its limitations. Causal conclusions cannot be drawn from qualitative research as its aim is to explore and describe (Milward, 1995). The researcher is also highly involved in the production and interpretation of the data, which could result in individual biases influencing the study (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Therefore, it is suggested that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies should be used to achieve more rigorous insight into the chosen field.

The study also employed a non-experimental, cross-sectional design. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) describe non-experimental research as systematic empirical enquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control of the variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipuable. The variables in the study were not manipulated or assigned to particular treatments, because the nature of the variable was such as to preclude manipulation. There was also no random sampling involved in the study.

A cross-sectional design measures human behaviour at one specific time and place (Murphy and Davidshofer, 1998). This design precludes knowledge of the circumstances preceding this point in time, however, as there are time limitations on the data collection, this remains the most practical method of analysis. This type of design also allows for comparisons between the participants and will be useful in assessing commonalities and differences in the responses of the participants (Murphy and Davidshofer, 1998).

Procedure and Ethical considerations

Formal written permission for access to a sample was received from an organisation. Permission was granted to the researcher to hand out information letters to all technical advisors within the call centre (see appendix 1). The employees were requested to study the information sheet and then contact the researcher should they be interested in participating in the study. They were required to give written consent to participate in the study.

Due to the policy of confidentiality, the participants were invited to initiate contact with the researcher either telephonically or via email. The participant was then required to give written consent to be interviewed. Written consent was also required from the participant for the interview to be recorded for analysis purposes. Separate consent forms were signed by the participant (see appendices 2 and 3).

Participants were assured of absolute confidentiality regarding their responses and all recordings were destroyed once the data was transcribed. Written material has been kept securely by the School of Human and Community Development until any potential publications have been completed, however, no names will appear on any documentation.

This type of call centre has been established recently to provide a service to organisations for managed maintenance and fleet management. The department is divided between those who deal with payments and monetary issues and then the technical advisors who provide the advice and fleet management service to the clients. The environment is typical of a call centre, with open plan offices and each agent having their own cubicle. It is a noisy environment as there are many conversations taking place simultaneously.

The interviews took place at the organisation, at times convenient to the technical advisors. The venue was a room in their building, but away from their workstations. This was important so as to maintain confidentiality. The length of the interviews ranged between an hour and three hours. The time taken was dependant on the type of

information that was being given and the willingness of the interviewee to give the information.

There were no rewards for participation in the study; and participation was voluntary. Participating or not had no implications for the participants. They could leave the interview at any time if they wished to. Confidentiality was ensured by destroying all recorded information once the data had been transcribed. Written transcripts have been kept securely by The School of Human and Community Development until any potential publications have been completed, but participant's names will not appear on these transcripts. Each interviewee was given a number, which was used in transcripts rather than names. The study was for research purposes and the information letter stated that the results of the study might be published in some form.

Participants were treated with respect and dignity as they are more important than the research.

Sample

In the study, the intention was to study a relatively homogenous sample in order to look for trends and similarities- although diversity was also of interest. Given the time and resource limitations, a small sample from which rich information could be gleaned was preferred to conducting less in-depth research with a larger sample. The study took the form of a case study, which can be described as an intensive investigation of a single unit (Cassell and Symon, 1994). Therefore, all the subjects came from a single department at a specific organisation which was described previously.

Elements of both purposive and convenience sampling procedures was used. In order to select members who are technical advisors (specialised population), purposive sampling was used. All subjects who agreed to participate in the study did so voluntarily, and hence it could be termed a convenience sample. It should be noted that this method is open to volunteer bias, however, it is economical, convenient and simple to do.

The typical sample consisted of five full time technical advisors from the single organisation. They were all male, ranging between the ages of 27 and 34 years old. Three out of the five men were engaged, one was married and one was still single. The length or service at the organisation ranged from 3 months to just over 6 years. All the technical advisors had at least a matric qualification, plus a tertiary education in the technical or mechanical field. They were all mechanics by trade having completed their apprenticeships, although not all of them had written the professional trade test.

Data Analysis

The method of analysis used was phenomenology. A phenomenological inquiry aims to unveil the essence of a social experience (Moustakas, 1994). It concentrates on the structure of individual experiences, in order to identify themes and meanings related to the phenomenon of interest. The study was concerned with the individual technical advisor's particular account of reality rather than an objective reality itself, and the particular account of concern was the technical advisors rather than the researcher (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenological analysis consists of four stages, namely: Epoche, Phenomenological Reduction, Imaginative variation, and Synthesis (Moustakas, 1994). Epoche is a Greek word meaning, "to stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things," (Moustakas, 1994, p.33). Epoche focuses on a situation, person or issue, and review feelings and thoughts that emerge. It requires a new way of looking at things, a way that requires we learn to see what stands before our eyes, with prejudices and biases set aside. This process takes place until it is clear enough to see experiences as they are (Moreno, 1999).

Following the Epoche, the next essential process is phenomenological reduction. In this process, the task is to describe in textural language the experiences of the participant (Moreno, 1999). The steps of phenomenological reduction include: (1) bracketing, in which the focus of the research is placed in brackets, everything else is set aside so that the entire research is focused solely on the topic and the research questions; (2) horizonalising, where every statement is treated as having equal value; (3) deleting repetitive or irrelevant statements, leaving only horizons (the textural meanings and constituents of the phenomenon) and (4) cluster the horizons into themes, and complete a full textural description of the experience (Moustakas, 1999).

The next stage of phenomenological research is called imaginative variation. According to Moustakas (1994) this stage seeks possible meanings through the use of the imagination, different frames of reference and perspectives, and divergent positions or functions. The aim is to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience and a detailed account of the conditions that have brought about the experiences as

they were lived by the participant. Universal structural groundings connected with the textural description are also looked at, for example, structures of time, space, materiality, causality, and relationship to self and to others (Moreno, 1999).

The final step is, "the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essence of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole," (Moustakas, 1994, p.100). However, it should be noted that the essences of any experience are never totally exhausted and time permitting, new perspectives can always be added for a more complete description of the phenomenon.

The interviews were taped and the transcripts transcribed verbatim. The tapes were listened to and the texts read a number of times, to give a detailed description of each technical advisor's account. The phenomenological inquiry facilitated the advisor providing his own story, without being overly influenced by the researcher as open-ended questions were asked, to which the participant answered freely. Probing questions were only asked where the researcher felt that the participant did not touch on that specific area in his general answer to the more central questions. From each individual description, a composite description was then developed, that represented the group as a whole. The composite description was integrated through a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the experience. Drawing upon common themes, as well as experiences unique to certain participants highlighted this. The results of the analysis process, illustrated by direct quotes from the participants, follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter will report on the results of the study. It will look at the various themes that were evident in the stories of the technical advisors, and will be looked at in relation to the research questions posed in the study.

Research Question One: What factors influenced the change in career?

A theme that emerged form the interviews was that most left the workshop environment for improvement of life. This is illustrated by the following quote by one of the technical advisors:

> "…at times I felt empty, like I was not completely satisfied in life."

During the reduction step in the phenomenological process, another theme that was common was that the technical advisors felt that they had reached their peak at the workshop and that there was no room for growth. By becoming a technical advisor, they felt that they were opening themselves up to more opportunities in the workplace. One interviewee said:

> "In the workshop the furthest you can go is to become a foreman, if you are lucky."

One interviewee highlighted lack of growth, coupled with the lack of study opportunities. The interviewer did not expect this answer. The interviewee said:

> "People don't give you a chance to grow. There you must qualify and stay at that level, and there are no courses as compared to here."

However, the other four did not mention study opportunities at first. Only when the interviewer asked them the question relating to where they see themselves going now, did they mention that they would like to pursue their studies further.

It was also said that one of the reasons for changing was due to the lack of challenges in the workshop environment. When probed about what type of challenges were lacking, it was said that the workshop environment became repetitive for some as they specialised and continuously did the same work. They continuously worked on the same vehicles and through intuitive integration, it could be argued that they felt that they were not required to think a lot as the work was repetitive and they had the manuals to follow. The following quotes illustrate this:

> "Basically the workshop environment had become boring for me. I needed something more challenging."
>
> "The everyday routine just became boring, probably the environment too. I felt like I didn't need to use my brain anymore."

Another theme that was evident with the technical advisors was physical strain that their bodies were taking. The response was what the interviewer expected and all five of the technical advisors mentioned this as one of the reasons for leaving the workshop environment. This made them have less energy after work and therefore minimised activity when at home. This is illustrated by the following quote:

> "I use to be physically tired. You go home tired and then don't want to study or do anything."

If one uses imaginative variation, it could imply that at the stage that they are in their lives, it is important for them to be fit and be able to work to provide for their

families. Three of the five technical advisors are married and need to be able to support their families. One is about to be married and also cannot afford not to be working. However, they did emphasise that they missed being able to walk around freely and not having to sit at a desk all the time. One technical advisor said:

> "I am an outdoor kind of guy and I liked the workshop where I could move a round, run, jump and go outside. Here you are in an office and at a desk."

At the workshop, they were able to walk freely and were not deskbound as they are in the call centre. An example which one technical advisor gave, was smoking. He said that when he was at the workshop, he just walked out the door and had a smoke, whereas in the office, he has to go downstairs to a designated smoking area to smoke. He mentioned that a lot of time gets wasted now and that he cannot leave when he feels, but has to log off first and then go have a smoke.

An exception to the general reasons for making a change in career, which became evident during bracketing of information, was one technical advisor who was forced to change as he worked in a very small workshop which was closed down. He was unemployed for a long time while trying to find another mechanic position. He then applied for the technical advisor position; a position he did not know existed previously. He stated that had he known, he would have left the workshop environment earlier. The following quote expresses his view:

> "If I knew that this (technical advisor position) existed when I was still in the workshop, I would have moved across back then and made a killing."

Another exception was changing for a better salary. He said:

> "Before I had limited financial resources and could not plan to buy things."

The technical advisor said that although there was not a significant increase in salary, the little extra allowed him to save more money every month. It must be noted that all the technical advisors did not feel that the salary (actual cash component) was better than before, however with the added benefits, it worked out better. They did not have to pay for medical aid on their own like they did at the workshop, but it was now a benefit.

One technical advisor also mentioned management as his reason for leaving. He felt that in the workshop environment, managers were not always supportive and available. He said:

> 'The manager here comes to greet everyone in the morning. I never had that in the workshop; I probably never got to see the manager immediately, I'd have to wait for at least two days."

He felt that he needed a manager who was more of a coach or mentor who would help him grow and develop in his chosen field. However, this was not the case in the workshop where he worked and therefore decided to leave that type of environment. From the information given by the interviewee it can be said that the call centre has a more hands on management style as compared to the workshop environment. However this is not always seen as positive, as when sifting through the information, it became evident that the technical advisors were not all comfortable with the constant monitoring as their manager sat along side them in an open plan office. One said:

> "I am getting use to it, but when I just started here I felt like I was under constant surveillance. It was quite scary."

<u>Research Question Two</u>: How has the change affected their work patterns and work life?

After sifting through the information, one of the biggest changes that all the technical advisors had to deal with was having to work with computers. Most of them had no or limited experience working on computers and therefore saw it as a huge challenge. They said:

> "I knew how to switch it (computer) on and that's all. I thought they wouldn't hire me."
>
> "If you are going to employ me, I must tell you that I know nothing about computers."

When the technical advisors were employed all of them had to attend training, where they learnt how to use a computer and specifically, the operating system. Given the lack of experience, the technical advisors were concerned that they may not be able to grasp the concepts. This was evident when one said:

> "I hoped and prayed that I did not have to find another job because I would not be able to work on a computer."

This implies that the technical advisors experienced stress with regards to the computer. This was a huge change for them as they had not worked on computers before and even if they had knowledge of how it worked, they were not able to work quickly. However, they were given the assurance and support that they needed form management at the call centre.

> "They were very patient with me and helped me for a few weeks, by then I was fine. I still ask for help at times."

This quote leads on to the next theme which was highlighted. All said that they felt that the call centre environment was stressful, but they had more support from managers that in the workshop. They mentioned that not only were their managers more visible, but they were more understanding. One interviewee said:

> "They are very supportive here. When I started here and I was sick and the manager came to me and said you're not well, go home and get some rest. I said that I was busy with something and would go after and he said not to worry about it, my health is more important."

Another interviewee reflected on some of his experiences and said:

> "One day my fiancé called and said that she was going to the doctor for test results and did not want to go alone. I asked my manager if I could go, knowing that it was so busy! He said that I must go and be with her. At the workshop it would have been a definite no."

When probed further about the impact the change has had on their work life, another answer was growth within the workplace. Most of the technical advisors felt that at the call centre there was more room for growth as they were sent on courses and external training to enhance their knowledge. One interviewee said that there was also lateral movement, where they could be transferred to a different team and thereby gain experience dealing with different issues and different customers. Also, the more senior people who worked their shared their knowledge and experience, which allowed the technical advisors to grow in their positions. He said:

> "If I got a problem, I ask one of the guys who is more experienced and in this environment they give you everything. They will not hide information from you, unlike in the workshop, where they will never tell you."

They also emphasised that they enjoyed the team work, not only because they had more senior people to learn from, but it created a social atmosphere. People communicated with each other because they wanted to, and not because they were forced to. An interviewee said:

> "Here you work in a team, which you do not have at the workshop. It's more social and there is more interaction with co workers. You are all working towards something, not just waiting for the next car to come in."

However, from all the information gleaned in the interviews, it can be argued that they did have relationships with other mechanics in the workshop, but the interaction was not always required. Each person was assigned to their own bay and worked on their own cars.

While bracketing the information, it became evident that other than working with computers, another big difference was the dress and etiquette of the environment. In the workshop environment, most wore uniforms and trainers. At the call centre, it was compulsory to wear a shirt and pants. All of them agreed that taking care of their appearance and watching how and what is said was difficult at first, but they have changed their habits over time. One said:

> "In the workshop you come in, you don't care what you say or how you look; you know that there is a job that must be done, you do it, and at end of the day you go home. Here (call centre) you have to care about your appearance, how you speak to people, and your attitude. Everything is so different and it takes a lot of work. You actually have to work more on your behaviour as part of adjusting to the new environment."

Another said:

> "I have more money at the end of the month now and therefore I can buy the formal clothes. The benefits really help to maintain a lifestyle."

The added benefits that the technical advisors were getting at the call centre were also highlighted by them during the interviews. They mentioned some of the benefits, like reduced rates on car loans, medical aid and reduced bank charges. They said that the little extra that they were saving each month enabled them to plan in advance. The following quote illustrate this:

> "Now I can plan what I am going to do with my money and I have more options."

It must be noted that not all of them got an increase in salary when they were employed, however they all felt that they could achieve more with their overall salary because of the benefits as compared to the workshop, where they received no added benefits, except staff rates for the purchase of vehicles. At first, they did not mention receiving benefits at the workshop, however after further probing, they mentioned the staff rates on car purchases. However, it can be argued that none of them made use of the benefit as they were not in a position financially, to purchase new vehicles. They needed the money to pay for medical aid and other benefits, which they now receive as part of their package.

One of the other changes to their work was the nature of their work. While the same knowledge as the workshop was required to perform the job, the work was no longer physical. They even felt that this was a safer environment. An interviewee said:

> "You do not get hurt here, it's much safer as there is no heavy machinery or tools."

All work in the call centre is conducted over the telephone and each technical advisor deals with clients directly. There is no longer physical strain on their bodies and they do not feel physically tired. They use more mental energy in the call centre rather than physical energy like in the workshop. Dealing directly with the customers is also different as in the workshop, they did not meet the clients as they just completed job cards and the foreman dealt with the customers. Therefore, it was crucial to learn telephone etiquette and patience with clients. Some of them found it difficult and said that previously even at home, they would not answer the phone in a hurry. Now, they have no choice. Over time, they felt that they have adapted to their new way of work and all felt that it has been very positive. The following quote emphasises this:

> "I have overcome my fear of the phone and have learnt how be speak properly. I know now about talking at the proper speed and making sure that the person understand what you say even if it means repeating yourself. I never knew about these things before, and I am really happy that I am wiser now."

The technical advisors also said that the recognition that they received was much better than at the workshop. One said that he felt more motivated to work hard and resolve client queries as he wanted to be voted as employee of the month. He said that everyone had an equal opportunity and that the little competition was good. However, while sifting through the information an exception became evident. One interviewee said that he had been there for two years and felt that the rewards programme was not a motivating factor, but demotivated him as he had not got voted as yet. He felt that the competitive environment was unhealthy. His statement illustrates this:

"Most of the men here work well together, but when you bring in rewards for work, it becomes an unpleasant and competitive environment. People try to outsmart each other and it can lead to people stabbing each other in the back."

This implies that people are motivated by different values.

<u>Research Question Three</u>: How has the work life changes affected the other domains of their life?

While reading through the information, the interviewer saw that all of the technical advisors spoke about the working hours. Before they would start at 7am or 7:30am and work until 5pm. Some were also on standby on weekends or after hours. At the call centre, they work from 8am to 4:30pm with an hour for lunch. They said that they felt like they had more time to spend with their families and friends. One interviewee said:

"I can drop my kids off at school now, so I get to spend more time with them."

Another spoke about the weekend standby:

"Now I can plan things to do on a weekend. I can go away for a weekend, without having to consult the roster for standby."

Both emphasised that the little extra time has improved their relationships with their families. Also, they can get involved in activities around the house. One interviewee said that he has time to do gardening with his wife on weekends. He said:

"My wife has green fingers, and now I get to spend quality time with her in the garden. I get to do things with her that she loves."

This taps into the value that they place on spending time with their families. It was constantly referred to as having a huge impact on their personal lives and felt that

during their time at the workshop, it was their biggest sacrifice. One of the technical advisors said:

> "I use to feel really guilty about not being able to spend so much time with my wife and children…thankfully they understood that as a sole breadwinner, I had no choice but to work on weekends. Now I feel so relieved."

Linked to the extra time, is the extra energy that the technical advisors have since changing jobs. They all spoke about not being physically tired anymore and therefore they have the opportunity to be involved in other activities. The following quotes taken form the transcripts show some of the activities that the technical advisors engage in after work:

> "When I go home and my friends want to go out for drink, I can go. Before, I use to be too tired to go out during the week."
>
> "I am studying a diploma, and now I have taken on more subjects as I can go home and study. Not like in the workshop, where I had no energy to open a book at night."
>
> "When I leave at 4:30pm, I leave work behind and focus on what is next. I can play soccer now. Before I worked till late and then sat in traffic. Now I get home earlier, the half hour makes a huge difference for me."

The quotes imply that the technical advisors were generally too tired to go out after work or to engage in activities like studying as they had no energy to do so. This is due to the physical labour that they were use to at the workshop, however, in the call centre, they due not exert themselves physically. Although, it must be noted that they do feel tired, but in a different form. A technical advisor spoke about getting mentally tired after a day of answering lots of queries. He said that there were days when he

felt drained, not physically, but mentally and felt like he did not want to think anymore once his work day had ended.

The support that they receive from the managers and co workers at the call centre has also impacted on their lives. They spoke about being able to attend to personal matters during working hours. The interviewer did not expect to have this raised, however probed further to understand it fully. One technical advisor said:

> "Now I can be with my family when they need me, not like before, where I we were told that personal problems must be left at home. It is not like we can time when someone is going to be in an accident or get sick."

The benefits and access to resources has also changed their lives. They felt that they are able to provide more for their families and themselves. Those who were married said that financial matters were not as stressful anymore. Before they had to pay for medical aid on their own, whereas now they got it as part of their package. The following quote illustrates this:

> "Medical aid is so important these days. You never know when you might end up in hospital. Yet, it is so expensive, especially if you are paying for a family. Now, I don't have to stress about that as it goes off immediately and whatever money I have, I can use for other things."

Once again, this relates to the value that the technical advisors place on family and being able to provide for them in the best possible way.

Some of the technical advisors spoke about personal responsibility. They mentioned that with the new job, came added responsibility. They had to dress and act differently

at work, and this spilled over to other areas of their life too. One in particular spoke about his manners, saying:

> 'I find that I swear less now. My mum has also noticed the change and says that it is good. It is not that I am trying very hard now, it is becoming natural to speak like that"

One spoke about his general demeanor as changing. Another spoke about being aggressive and highly stressed because of the nature of his job previously. He said:

> "I'm more relaxed now and everybody tells I've changed so much. I think that at the end of the day now, I am happy and relaxed. I do not take stress home with me, because I know that tomorrow I will start on a new page."

Therefore, after repeated reading through the transcripts, it can be said that the technical advisors have better work life balance than they had previously.

One technical advisor spoke about life changes that he made. He said:

> "Now I have a house, a car, and good things for my family and myself. Had I been in the workshop I would not worry where I was and what was happening."

Another mentioned that he became more mature and decided to get engaged. He emphasised that he did not even think about marriage while in the workshop. He said that he was not sure if it was the people that he worked with or just that he had grown so much personally, that made him take the next step in his relationship. He said:

> "Before, I took her for granted. I did not think about the future and lived for the moment. Now I feel like an adult and I think about the long term."

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter aims to discuss the findings of the current study, and explain and relate the findings back to previous research and literature. It will look at the relevant themes highlighted in the previous chapter. Finally, practical and theoretical implications of research will be examined together with limitations of the study.

Work has different psychological benefits for different people, however in this study the results show that work for all the technical advisors meant more than a salary, it was seen as a source of self-esteem or self worth. Thus it supports the findings of Sonnenburg (1997) who said that meaning of work is seen as a significant component of the transition form adolescence to mature adulthood. This further supported by the fact that technical advisors left the workshop for an improvement of life. It was also emphasised that change in career has enabled them to move forward in their personal, with some getting engaged, married, or being able to provide more for their children. Sonnenburg (1997) stated further that facilitate growth and development of personality, and this is supported by the results as the technical advisors mentioned a change in behaviour, not only in the workplace, but also in personal relationships.

Early on in the study, a question was posed asking if a technical advisor's decision to become a technical advisor is seen as progression or advancement (Woodd, 2000). The answer to the question depends very much on how the person views success and what he or she values. From the findings of the study, it can be said that the technical advisors viewed the change positively and as progression in their careers. Not only was there more variety in their work, they also took on more responsibility in terms of

having direct contact with clients. If one looks purely at salary, it can be argued that it is not progression. However, the technical advisors agreed that all the other components of the job compensated for the low salary and therefore they still viewed the change as progression. From the results it is also evident that they felt as though they had reached a ceiling at the workshop, whereas in the call centre, they saw opportunities to grow.

According to the age of all the respondents and where they are in their careers, they fit into the establishment stage of Super's Development Theory (Super, 1980) and it is therefore representative of the sample. Super (1980) highlighted self-concept in his theory, saying that individuals go through a process whereby they develop their own opinion of the attributes that they have. Greenhaus (1987) stated that the development may include abilities, needs or values. This theory is supported by the findings in this study as the technical advisors saw themselves as adding value and not just part of a production line anymore. Initially they were not sure if they would be able to make the transition, however once they had training and were able to interact with the new environment, their abilities were develop and they saw themselves positively. They developed new coping mechanisms to deal with the type of stress that they were experiencing. Most of them also highlighted that their values had changed and that they were comfortable with their new values. Things that were important to them previously were not as important now that they changed careers. Individuals are said to enter an occupation that is most compatible with their self-concept (Greenhaus: 1987), however one cannot say that the findings from the study support this. It is possible that given how new this kind of position is, the technical advisors decided to take a chance and see if they enjoy the type of work and environment. Most of their

development came from being in the position, rather than before they were hired as technical advisors.

It can argued that some of the technical consultants are in a period of trial in their lives, which relates to Super's life stage of establishment (Shreuder and Theron, 1997) which was discussed in the literature review. Most of them are only in their second jobs and are busy exploring the different opportunities that are available to them. However, there were also some who are at the stabilization phase, where they have explored different opportunities previously and have now decided that stability and security is more important that change. This was directly related to the age and marital status of the person as those who were younger and single felt that if a better opportunity came along, they would pursue it. However, the married men who had families to support felt that stability was crucial as they had more responsibilities.

The above findings link directly to Super's Life- Career Rainbow (Herr and Cramer, 1996), which shows that an individual in the establishment stage is likely to take on the roles of worker and homemaker. From the results of the study, it can be said that the technical advisors have taken on both roles. Most of them are fathers or have decided to get engaged or married after they made the transition to the new position. For those who were married before making the transition, the change has allowed them to fulfill the role of homemaker better than what they use to do.

The technical advisors changed from a workshop to a call centre which is reliant on technology to operate effectively. All of them had no or limited experience working with computers. This supports the definition of stress by Lazarus (1993), who said

that stress is a deviation from the norm. It also supports the definition of technostress presented by Brod (1984) which states that it occurs when individuals are not able to interact with the new technology in an appropriate way. The results support this as they all felt some form of technostress when they started due to there limited use of computers. However, as time passed the technostress did not disappear, it just became less due to their training and in some cases mastery of the system used on a daily basis. This kind of technostress is experienced directly through the use of computers and indirectly as some feared not being employed due to their inability to use the computer. Therefore this supports Weil and Rosen's (1997) theory, where technostress is not seen as a disease, but rather as people's reactions to technology and its influence on their views.

Bradley (1989) stated that when the needs of a person is not harmonious with the work environment, that person is likely to be under stimulated or over stimulated and this leads to stress. This can be seen from the information gained in the interviews, where it was said that not having enough variety was one of the reasons for leaving the workshop environment. Bradley's (1989) states that this type of under stimulation leads to stress. Another example is too much physical load which leads to over stimulation and this also leads to stress. One of the technical advisors also spoke about lack of people contact in the workshop environment and not enough contact with people from work leads to under stimulation. Therefore, it can be said that Bradley's (1989) theory of stress is relevant to the group of technical advisors interviewed in this study.

Khan (2003) reported that low levels of technostress are associated with high levels of quality of work life. This is supported by the results of this study as the technical advisors showed very high levels of technostress initially and therefore were not sure if the position was for them and whether they had made a good decision to change careers. However, with training and experience, they started to be more competent and comfortable with the computer, thereby reducing the technostress. They then started to enjoy the job and their quality of work life increased.

As per research by Greenhaus et al. (1987) quality of work life is important as a happy employee is likely to be productive, dedicated and loyal. Therefore, it can be said that if the technostress had not been reduced, there is a likelihood that the technical advisor may have resigned as he had little or no satisfaction in his job.

The needs satisfaction model developed by Sirgy et al. (2001) proves to be relevant to the present study. The underlying concepts that relate to an individual's basic needs are related to some of the reasons for the change in career and the experience of the new quality of work life. Some of the concepts highlighted in Porter's Need satisfaction Questionnaire (1961) were also highlighted by the technical advisors. The concepts are: the level of employee needs that are pursued on the job, as some of the technical advisors felt that they needed more from their jobs and that there was no opportunity for growth in the workshop. This links to another concept, the level of organisational resources relevant to the needs of the employee, as there might not have been more senior positions available for the respondents in the workshop. The organisations might not have had the financial resources to promote the respondents.

The findings also relate to Maslow's hierarchy, where survival needs, security needs, pay, social needs and the need for self-esteem are highlighted. The findings in this study support these concepts as people made a change in career to support one or even all of the needs. Not all were motivated by the same needs, however they did make a change due to individual needs. The satisfaction that they get from their new job and new environment shows that some, if not all, their needs have been met.

Crouter (1984) highlighted the spillover approach to quality of work life saying that satisfaction in one area of life may influence satisfaction in another. Sirgy et al. (2001) took this further and hypothesized that satisfaction in a life domain is directly influenced by quality of work life as the work domain play a direct role in satisfying needs. This has been shown as true for this study, as personal needs were satisfied in the workplace and the effect spilled over to other domains of their life. Not only in terms of finance, where they could afford to buy new cars or plan for future events, but also on a personal level, where they were able to get engaged as they felt that they had more security. Also, relationships have become better as attitudes have changed and behaviours are also different.

From the above it can be said that the reasons for change in careers relates to Super's Life stage of establishment, not only because of the age, but also because of the stages of development. Quality of work life also changed and became better since changing jobs, as more of their needs have been met or fulfilled. The satisfaction that they experience at work has also led to increased satisfaction in other domains of their life. There is a direct link between the quality of work life and the quality of the rest of their lives.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

The results produced in this research study have implications, practical implications for both the organisation and the employees. These will be discussed below.

The organisation can use the findings to better understand the transition that the mechanics make to become technical advisors. They experience a great amount of stress when they first change to the call centre environment and the organisation can use the findings to assist the technical advisors with the training and induction that they require initially. Stress can lead to absenteeism and employee dissatisfaction, which in turn can lead to turnover and financial loss to the company. Therefore, the organisation is able to use what was said by the technical advisors to make the call centre experience less stressful and thereby retain their staff. It has been stated that the transition is overwhelming and that at first the mechanics were not sure that they had made the correct choice. Also, the organisation can assist the technical advisors in dealing with work-life balance and lessen role conflict.

From an employees' side, it relates to job satisfaction and work-life balance. For many of the technical advisors, the move to the call centre has brought them more satisfaction and this has spilled over into their home life, where they now have more time to spend with their families. However, the transition has not always been easy and by having a better understanding of the changes that took place, coping strategies can be used to try to reduce or avoid the stress that the mechanic felt when making the transition to the call centre.

LIMITATIONS

One of the biggest limitations of the study is its generalisability to other populations. The sample size was very small and therefore limits its generalisability. Only five technical advisors were interviewed as there were no responses to the letters left at the organisation. This could have been improved by asking the technical advisors to place their names in a sealed box and the researcher then making contact with them. Alternatively, the interviews could have taken place after hours at a time convenient to the technical advisors, whereby more confidentiality could have been ensured.

Another limitation of the study is that it was cross-sectional. Data was collected only at one point in time. This did not allow for the investigation of changes as the mechanics made the transition from the workshop to the call centre, or even further adaptation to the call centre.

The men in the study were self-selected. The researcher stated at the onset what would be involved in the study and what would be required of them. The technical advisors committed their time to it and it therefore implies that they were motivated to discuss the transition that they have been through. Other technical advisors may have been reluctant to discuss this to such a degree.

CONCLUSION

This research study began with the aim to describe why Mechanics change their careers to become Technical Advisors in a call centre. Their new quality of work life was explored, as well as the impact of their work life on the other domains, such as

family, leisure, home, etc. The study focused on stress and compared and contrasted the two work environments; that of the workshop and the call centre.

The study adopted an interpretative phenomenological view, where interviews were conducted to facilitate the technical advisors providing their own stories of their experiences of the transition from the workshop environment to a call centre. The results of the study showed various reasons as to why they decided to make the initial change in careers, and the establishment stage of Super's Developmental Theory proved to be appropriate. The change in careers impacted on their way of work and the quality of their work lives as the environment was completely different and the coping mechanisms that they had used previously, were no longer appropriate and they had to develop new coping mechanisms. However, all the technical advisors that were interviewed found great satisfaction in making the change in career and this satisfaction spilled over into their personal lives, be it with their family or their personal demeanor.

REFERENCE LIST

Adorno, A.J. (1989). Understanding and combating employee turnover in Call Centres (online). Available URL: www.dedamogroup.com

Aldwin, C. (1994). Stress, Coping and Development: An Integrative Perspective. New York: Guildford Press.

Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. (2001). The Practice of Social Research. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Bagnara, S., Gabrielli, F. and Marti, P. (2000). Human work in the call centre. Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, 1, 55-61.

Bradley, G. (1989). Computers and the Psychosocial work environment. Taylor & Francis: New York.

Brod, C. (1984). Managing Technostress: Optimising the use of computer technology. Personnel Journal. Oct, 753 –757.

Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (1994). Qualitative methods in Organizational Research. London: Sage Publications.

Cooper, C. (1999). Manila targets call centres. [online]
Available: file://A:\Business Asia: Manila targets call centres.htm

Cooper, C. and Cartwright, S. (1994). Healthy mind; healthy organisation: A proactive approach to occupational stress. Human Relations, 47(4), 455-471.

Crouter, A.C. (1984). Spillover from family to work: The neglected side of the work-family interface. Human Relations, 37, 425 –442.

Cunningham, M. (2001). Call Centre technology in the airline industry. [online] Available: file://A:\Airline industry-call centre technologies.htm

Danna, K. and Griffin, R.W. (1999). Health and Well being in the workplace. Journal of Management, 25(3), 357 –384.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (1998). Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials. New York: Sage Publications.

Genco, P. (2000). Technostress in our schools and lives. Book Report, 19(2), 42 -44.

Greenhaus, J. H. (1987). Career Management. United States of America: The Dryden Press.

Greenhaus, J.H., Bedian, A.G. and Mossholder, K.W. (1987). Work experiences, job performances, and feelings of personal and family well being. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 31, 200 –215.

Herr, E. L. and Cramer, S. H. (1996). Career Guidance and Counselling Through the Lifespan: Systematic Approaches. (5th ed.). United States of America: Harper Collins College Publishers.

Hudiburg, R.A. (1989). Psychology of Computer Use: VII: Measuring technostress: Computer related stress. Psychological Reports, 64, 767 –772.

Kerlinger, F.N. & Lee, H.B. (2000). Foundations of Behavioral Research (4th ed.). USA: Harcourt College.

Khan, K. (2003). Technostress, Quality of work life and Locus of Control. University of Witwatersrand: Unpublished Masters Thesis.

Langley, R. (1999). Super's Theory. In G. B. Stead and M. B. Watson (Eds), Career Psychology in the South African Context (pp. 67-90). Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik Publishers.

Lazarus, R. (1993). From psychological stress to the emotions: A history of changing outlooks. Annual Review of Psychology, 44, 1-21.

Leiter, M.P. and Durup, M.J. (1996). Work, home, and in-between: A longitudinal study of spillover. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 32(1), 29 –47.

Loscocco, K.A. and Roschelle, A.R. (1991). Influences on the quality of work and non-work life. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 39, 182 –225.

Lutrin, J. (2005). Identifying medical call centre stress: An evaluation of psychological and physical wellbeing. University of Witwatersrand: Unpublished Masters Thesis.

Milward, L. (1995). Focus Groups. In G.M. Breakwell, S. Hammond and C. Fife-Shaw (eds). Research Methods in Psychology. London: Sage Publications.

Moreno, V. (1999). On the social implications of organizational reengineering: A phenomenological study of individual experiences of BPR processes. Information Technology & People, 12(4): 359-389.

Moustakas, C. (1994). Phenomenological Research Methods. USA: Sage Publications.

Murphy, R. R. and Davidshofer, C.O. (1998). Psychological Testing: Principles and Applications. (4th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Porter, L.W. (1961). A study of perceived need satisfaction in bottom and middle management jobs. Journal of Applied Psychology, 45, 1 –10.

Potter, J. and Wetherell, M. (1987). Discourse and Social Psychology: beyond attitudes and behaviour. London: Sage.

Robbins, S., Millett, B., Caiocoppe, R. and Waters-Marsh, T. (1998). Organizational Behaviour, (2nd ed.). Sydney: Prentice-Hall.

Schreuder, A. M. G. and Theron, A. L. (1997). Careers: An Organisational Perspective. South Africa: Juta and Co, Ltd.

Sirgy, M.J., Efraty, D., Siegel, P., and Lee, D.J. (2001). A new measure of quality of work life based on need satisfaction and spillover theories. Social Indicators Research, 55(3), 241 –302.

Sonnenberg, D. (1997). The 'new career' changes: Understanding and managing anxiety. British Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 25(4), 463 –472.

Stead, G. B. and Watson, M. B. (1999). Indigenisation of Career Psychology in South Africa. In G. B. Stead and M. B. Watson (Eds), Career Psychology in the South African Context (pp. 214-225). Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik Publishers.

Super, D. (1980). A lifespan, lifespace approach to career development. Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 16, 282 –298.

The Call Centre Magazine. (1999). [online]
Available: http://www.whatis.com/callcent.htm

The SA Auto Yearbook. (2004). [online]
Available: http://www.aidc.co.za

Thomas, J.C. (2002). The Future of Career. Personnel Psychology, 55(3), 760 -763.

Weil, M.M. and Rosen, L.D. (1997). Coping with technology: At home, at work, at play. New York: John Riley & Sons.

Woodd, M. (2000). The psychology of career theory. Career Development International, 5(6), 273 -278.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION LETTER



UNIVERSITY
OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

Africa

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South

Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: 018lucy@muse.wits.ac.za

My name is Anusha Parshotam, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. The aim of the study is to describe how career change impacts on the quality of work life of the technical advisors. Career change will be looked at in terms of developmental theories such as Super's developmental theory. Quality of life will be looked at in terms of need satisfaction and spill-over theories (impact of quality of work life on quality of home life and vice versa). I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this research will entail being interviewed by myself, at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will last for approximately one hour. With your permission this interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation at any time, and will only be processed by myself. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

If you choose to participate in the study please leave your contact details in the sealed box provided. I will empty the box at regular intervals, and will contact you within two weeks in order to discuss your participation. Alternatively I can be contacted telephonically at 082 567 0242 or via e-mail at anusha_parshotam@absamail.co.za.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on call centers and specifically technical call centers.

Kind Regards,

Anusha Parshotam James Fisher (Supervisor)

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

I _____ consent to being interviewed by _____ for his/her study on _____. I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed _____

APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM FOR RECORDING

I _____ consent to my interview with _____ for his/her study on _____ being tape-recorded. I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signed _____

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Hello and thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. The main aim of my study is just to find out your story and your experience of working as a technical advisor. I do not want to influence you in any way. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the interview, please let me know and please ask any questions that you may have.

Biographical details: (for sampling purposes only)

Age:

Length employed at the organisation:

Marital status:

Interview Questions:

1. Please describe the reasons as to why you left the workshop environment and decided to work as a technical advisor. Probing questions will be asked to get as much information as possible.
2. Was the transition easy or difficult? Please elaborate. Further probing questions will be used to understand what was difficult and what was easy and why they felt that way.
3. Do you find the working conditions to be different now? Please elaborate. Probing questions will be used to draw contrasts and similarities between the workshop and the call centre.
4. How does your work life impact on your other life domains, such as husband/wife, parent, social, etc?

Do you have any questions?

Thank you for participating in my research- I really appreciate your time and involvement.