

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----------|
| Title page | i |
| Declaration | ii |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Abstract | iv |
| Table of contents | v |
| List of tables | vii |
| | |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.2. Rationale | 2 |
| | |
| CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW | 5 |
| 2.1. Call centres | 5 |
| 2.1.1. Call centre research | 7 |
| 2.2. Images | 9 |
| 2.2.1. Linguistic tropes | 10 |
| 2.2.2. Metaphors | 11 |
| 2.2.3. The role of metaphors | 13 |
| 2.2.4. Types of metaphor | 14 |
| 2.2.5. The previous use of metaphor theoretically and in research | 16 |
| 2.2.6. The role of imaginization | 23 |
| 2.3. Performance management | 24 |
| 2.3.1. Performance measurement systems | 27 |
| 2.3.2. Performance appraisals | 30 |
| 2.3.3. HR, team leaders/supervisors and management | 31 |
| 2.4. Conclusion | 32 |
| 2.5. Summary and aims | 33 |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY | 35 |
| 3.1. Aim of the study | 35 |
| 3.2. Nature of the research | 35 |
| 3.3. Pilot interviews | 36 |
| 3.4. Research design | 37 |
| 3.5. Procedure | 38 |
| 3.6. Sampling method | 39 |
| 3.7. Sample | 40 |
| 3.8. Data analysis | 44 |
| 3.9. Conclusion | 45 |
| CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION | 46 |
| 4.1. Introduction | 46 |
| 4.2. General descriptions of performance management | 46 |
| 4.2.1. Positive perceptions of performance management: comments and metaphors | 47 |
| 4.2.2. The performance management process | 48 |
| 4.2.3. Skills, abilities, growth and development | 51 |
| 4.2.4. Company goals and direction | 61 |
| 4.2.5. Customer satisfaction | 65 |
| 4.2.6. Reward, recognition and motivation | 66 |
| 4.2.7. Agent-supervisor relationship | 67 |
| 4.2.8. Ideal performance management | 74 |
| 4.3. Negative perceptions of performance management: comments and metaphors | 76 |
| 4.3.1. Lack of goals and direction | 78 |
| 4.3.2. The untapped value of the agent-supervisor relationship | 82 |
| 4.4. Perceptions of performance monitoring | 85 |
| 4.5. Contradictions between perceptions of performance management and performance monitoring | 91 |

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| 4.6. Images/metaphors used by employees at different levels in the organisation | 92 |
| 4.6.1. Management | 93 |
| 4.6.2. Supervisors | 94 |
| 4.6.3. Agents | 95 |
| 4.7. Summary | 97 |
| 4.8. Conclusion | 98 |
| CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH | 99 |
| CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION | 102 |
| REFERENCE LIST | 103 |
| APPENDICES | |
| APPENDIX A: Interview consent | 112 |
| APPENDIX B: Recording consent | 113 |
| APPENDIX C: Biographic questionnaire | 114 |
| APPENDIX D: Interview questions | 115 |
| LIST OF TABLES | page |
| Table 1: Biographical description of the sample | 41 |
| Table 2: Participant pseudo names, genders and positions | 43 |
| Table 3: Level variation in perceptions | 92 |