

**EMOTIONAL SUPPRESSION AND DEVIANT
BEHAVIOUR IN THE CALL CENTRE ENVIRONMENT**

RESEARCH REPORT

MASTERS IN INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this research report is my own independent work, and has not been presented for any other degree at any other academic institution, or published in any form.

It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts by Coursework and Research Report in the field of Industrial Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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Abstract

The present research aimed to analyse whether the emotional regulation or suppression of call center employees in response to customer aggression or abuse contributes to deviant behaviours, given the demands for friendly service in the work environment.

A call centre in Johannesburg, South Africa was used to conduct this research. This call centre provides leading client service to Retail Banking, Corporate Banking and Business Banking chosen markets. A qualitative study was conducted. Data was gathered by interviewing participants working at this call centre. A non - probability purposive sample of call centre employees was used. A sample of $n = 17$ was obtained for this research.

Data was analysed using both content analysis and thematic content analysis. The present research underscores the importance of exploring the aspects of emotional suppression and deviant behaviour of call centre agents in the workplace. Furthermore, the present research provides strong evidence for deviant behaviours engaged in which are often only assumed as a matter of a priori reasoning or vague allusion. This research has found that due to emotional suppression, certain call centre employees in this sample do engage in deviant behaviours at work and make attributions outside of work.

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Introduction

Call centres have rapidly become an established and significant part of the global economy and are said to be the most rapidly growing form of employment today (Deery & Kinnie, 2004). Call centres require their employees to be skilled at interacting directly with customers while simultaneously working with sophisticated computer based systems which dictate both the pace of their work and monitor its quality.

Many organisations have made call centres their principal source of interaction with customers. An important feature of service interactions in call centres is the emotions that employees express towards their customers. Call centre employees are expected to express positive emotions and suppress negative emotions in their interactions with customers. Therefore the manner in which employees express their feelings towards customers can have an important effect on the perceived quality of that service transaction (Deery & Kinnie,2004).

Employees are expected to display emotions that create a desired state of mind in the customer. In order to achieve this result call centres have sought to specify and control the way in which employees present themselves to customers (Van den Broek, 2004).

As Such, employees may contain feelings of frustration, resentment, and anger, which are not appropriate to express. If not given a healthy expressive outlet, this emotional

repression can profoundly affect our behaviours and could result in possible forms of deviant behaviour in the work and non work domains.

It is these two aspects ie. emotional suppression and deviant behaviours which provides a fascinating yet hitherto relatively unexplored area for research and investigation. This research consequently aims at analysing whether the emotional regulation or suppression of call center employees in response to customer aggression or abuse contributes to deviant behaviours, given the demands for friendly service in the work environment.

PART 1: Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Chapter a)

Call Centres and Electronic Performance Monitoring

The purpose of this research is to analyse whether the emotional regulation or suppression of call centre employees in response to customer aggression or abuse contributes to deviant behaviours, given the demands for friendly service in the work environment. Since the area of research focuses on call centres, it is sensible that this chapter begin with an introduction into the area of call centres including an explanation of electronic performance monitoring in order to understand the environment within which the average call centre employees operates.

This research report is divided into two halves. Part 1 addresses the theoretical and conceptual background of the research and Part 2 focuses on the present research.

The following chapters in Part 1 of this research report aims to canvass *inter alia* the following: Chapter b, entitled emotional suppression of call centre agents will explain the first main variable of the study ie. emotional suppression. Examples of previous research will be provided and critically analysed. The importance of emotional suppression in the context of this study will also be highlighted.

The final chapter of part 1 of this research report chapter c, entitled deviant behaviour in the call centre environment will provide a discussion of the next variable of this study

ie.deviant behaviour. Previous research relating to deviant behaviours will be explained and critically analysed. Furthermore, the significance of deviant behaviours will also be explained in the context of this study.

In light of the above, an introduction into the area of call centres including electronic performance monitoring will be discussed hereunder.

Call Centres

In our current service economy delivery of services is a major task for industry. Many organizations like to think of themselves as being client-orientated. As part of their company policy these organizations regard contact with their clients as a key feature of their company philosophy. Technological developments, such as information technology, have boosted this option (Dormann and Ziljstra, 2003).

Customers may want to contact the organization and talk to a customer representative, either to order a product or service, or to ask additional and specific questions.

Therefore organizations are looking for ways to be accessible to their customers, to be able to promptly answer questions customers may have, or to provide reliable and up-to-date information. In particular when the company sells products that are complex and entail all kind of technical features, customers may have all sorts of questions. Therefore, organizations see the necessity to set up a helpdesk where customers can get answers to their queries (Dormann and Ziljstra, 2003).

This evidently implies a huge number of contacts, and organizations are looking for efficient ways to organize these contacts. This has resulted in the creation of specialized departments for customer contacts: *the call centre*.

Call centres have become one of the most interesting environments for research. By definition, a call centre is a work environment in which the main business is mediated by computer and telephone-based technologies, which permit efficient distribution of calls and ensure customer-employee interaction (Holman, 2005). Over the last decade, call centres have emerged as a significant sector across many countries including South Africa.

According to Ojha and Kasturi (2005) call centres may be designed for inbound or outbound calls. Inbound call centres are those that receive calls from outside callers, who call the centre to seek certain assistance. Outbound call centres, on the other hand, contact persons who are already customers or are potential customers, to market or sell a product or service. Over 80% of the call centres, by some estimates, are inbound call centres.

The call centre employees are expected to interact with a large number of customers, and manage their dynamic environment as well as efficiently handle customer queries (Zemke, 2003). They are also expected to continuously update their knowledge of products and services even though in most call centres there is no time that has been reserved for this (Zemke, 2003).

The call centre employees are also constrained to a particular location and are required to deal with the demands of both interpersonal and technical skills. These call centre employees are required to problem solve while also inducing an emotional state of customer satisfaction. Previous research suggests that on average, a call centre employee is required to handle up to 150 calls a day (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993).

(Grebner, Semmer, Faso, Gut, Ka' lin, & Elfering, 2003; Zapf et al, 2003) found that a great variety of resources and stressors including aspects of emotion work are particularly high in call centre jobs, and are related to negative health outcomes within call centre environments. Lewig and Dollard (2003) also reported similar findings to those by (Zapf et al, 2003) within Australian call centres. Negative health outcomes such as emotional exhaustion and burnout were the main focus of these studies. Results indicate that the effects are similar across countries.

People have always been important to the success of any industry, but they are more critical in the service sector. This is particularly true in the call centre industry as call centre agents, despite being in the 'back office', are 'front line' employees in direct contact with the customer, and are often expected to act as ambassadors of the company. "Their job is complicated by the fact that they are normally expected to provide personalised services, without having an opportunity to interact with a customer in a normal face to face context" (Ojha and Kasturi, 2005, p94).

Call centre agents with high levels of skills and professionalism are key to achieving high levels of customer service and low operational costs. Agents who do not possess these attributes may cause irreparable damage to the organisation. Hence, hiring, training and retaining a workforce that is skilled and professional are key to the success of call centres (Wallace, Eagleson & Waldersee, 2000).

Different persons react differently to seemingly similar work environments. Personal dispositions influence the reaction of call centre agents to their work context. Hence, several researchers have argued that efforts should also be geared towards identifying the personal attributes of persons who will make good call centre agents. This will allow call centres to hire potential employees who are better equipped to be effective call centre employees (Ojha and Kasturi, 2005).

Even in call centres driven by quality rather than quantity, call centre work is of itself demanding, repetitive, and often stressful (Taylor and Bain, 1999; Wallace, Eagleson, & Waldersee, 2000). Given the rapid growth of the call centre industry it is important from a practical perspective that organizations are aware of the impact of the emotional and psychological demands of call centre work on their employees in order to optimize the effectiveness and well-being of front-line workers and decrease the costs of turnover and absenteeism.

Electronic Performance Monitoring

Electronic performance monitoring is a measurement system in call centres that focus on statistics generated by utilising technologically designed systems and call-rating by supervisors/call monitors to ensure surveillance and listen to calls, determine the length and number of calls in order to rate them according to the centres criteria (Smith, Carayon, Sanders, Lim, & Le Grande, 1992). Databases, transaction terminals, and the automatic call distribution system (ACD) are linked together to provide efficiency, a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness, reduced dependence on employee skills and cost savings (Houlihan, 2000). Thus in call centres, information and communication technologies (ICT's) are used to both create the conditions of work and then maintain and monitor them.

The primary technology for generating statistics in call centres is the ACD (automatic call distribution) system. This system automatically processes incoming telephone calls and distributes them to agents' headsets, as well as generates a constant set of statistics about the activities it coordinates (Richardson and Belt, 2000). Managers and supervisors can view these statistics, as they are generated in real time through the ACD, on their desktop computers, which allows them to track each employee's activities throughout the day. Weekly and monthly reports are also regularly generated to compare employees (Richardson and Belt, 2000).

The measurements that are used to manage a call centre include, average number of minutes per call, average number of rings or seconds before an answer, and the number of

calls handled per person per hour including call abandon rate (Sznelwar, Zilbovicius, & Soares, 2000). Measures also include the time between calls and the amount of time agents are available or unavailable to take calls. Townsend (2005) states that other measures include ability to empathise with the caller and wrap time (recording call details and subsequent actions required).

Although these measures seem to be relatively standard across call centres, research suggests that there is differences in the ways in which these numbers are used in practice in particular organisations (Holman, Chissick & Totterdell, 2002). Surveillance technology provides management with total power. Workers are never sure which call is being listened in to by management, with the result that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action (Townsend, 2005).

Chapter b)

Emotional Suppression of call centre agents

From the previous chapter it is evident that call centre jobs are paradigmatic of work that is emotionally demanding. Much of call centre work is closely monitored, tightly controlled and highly routinised. Computer technology plays a critical part in this process; calls can automatically be allocated to call centre agents to minimise waiting time, the speed of calls can continuously be measured and the quality of the interaction between customer and service provider can be assessed remotely and at management's discretion.

A key feature of interactive service work is the presentation of emotions that are specified by the organization and embodied in the rules of employment. (Deary, Iverson & Walsh, 2002) has described this as the commoditization of emotions. In voice-to-voice service work this has been characterized as 'smiling down the telephone' (Deary et al, 2002). During service transactions, employees are expected to display emotions that comply with certain norms or standards of the organisation, designed to create a desired state of mind in the customer. The standards or norms expected will be discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Customers care how services are delivered. Therefore the way in which employees display their feelings or emotions toward customers can have an important effect on the quality of the interaction. The attitudes of the employees are critical to the quality of the

interaction and their responses can either improve or impair the service that is provided to the customer (Deary et al, 2002). It is this reason why employees working in call centres are required to suppress their emotions. The behaviour of the employee is therefore central to the success of the service transaction. As a consequence, employers have sought to specify the way in which employees 'present themselves' to their customers.

Call centre agents are not only expected to execute their physical tasks competently and to display an understanding of their organisations products and procedures or practices but they are also held accountable for their emotions. Customer –employee interactions can have both positive and negative effects on employees as well as customers. Call centre agents in call centres must continually deal with very different calls, interacting with different callers who may be, in quick succession, polite, angry and upset, frustrated or friendly and chatty (Wilk and Moynihan, 2005).

Wilk and Moynihan (2005) further state that call centre agents are expected to express positive emotions and suppress negative emotions in their telephone interactions with customers. Unpleasant interactions with customers can be related to employee's efforts to regulate their emotions. Call centre agents are presented with emotional demands such as the frequency, intensity and variety of emotions they should display. In response to such demands call centre agents expend energy ie. effort is suppressing emotions in anticipation of generating rewarding relationships with their customers, however, no research evidence has been put forward to support this statement.

Call centre agents need to learn how to manage themselves. Customers should not be able to tell for example, if a call centre worker is unhappy. Regulation and management of feelings is of utmost importance (Thompson, Callaghan & Van den Broek, 2004).

Employees are expected to appear happy, nice and glad to serve the customer in spite of any private misgivings or any different feelings they may have, an aspect that most service providers, including call centre agents, find very stressful, among other emotionally demanding and stressful aspects of their work. Many agents find it difficult to remain calm and tactful in difficult situations with customers while simultaneously remaining personally disengaged (Ojha and Kasturi, 2005).

Most organisations have sought to instil values of good customer service in their staff by way of cultural or normative control. Leidner (1993) describes this as transforming workers characters and personalities. Requirements that staff display certain forms of behaviour which conform to organizationally established norms are now common in most areas of interactive service work. This has led to particularly invasive forms of workplace control. Control workers too completely, as Deery and Kinnie (2004) mention, and management will extinguish exactly those feelings of worker self direction and spontaneity that are so crucial for service quality. Tight control can deliver efficient task completion but is unlikely to elicit high quality performance from call centre agents.

The rapid rise of the service sector, and in particular the call centre industry has made the study of emotional labour increasingly important within the area

of occupational stress research (Lewig and Dollard, 2003). This new type of work demand, that of emotional labour, has emerged as a key component of interactive service work.

The idea that employees regulate the expression of emotion in exchange for a wage is called emotional labour according to Holman (2005). The concept of emotional labour was first used by sociologist Arlie Horchschild in 1983 to analyse the jobs of flight attendants and bill collectors and has been defined as “the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions” (Lewig and Dollard, 2003, p367).

Central to the theories on emotional labour is the notion of emotional dissonance, which occurs when the required emotional expression does not match the emotions felt. “When dissonance occurs the employee can either display his true emotions, thereby violating job requirements or try to display the required emotion” (Holman,2005,p33). If the employee chooses the latter option, (Grandey, Dickter & Sin, 2004) state that two modes of emotional regulation may be used, namely surface acting or deep acting.

(Grandey, Dickter & Sin, 2004) state that surface acting on the one hand entails modifying behaviours by suppressing or faking emotions with little attempt to feel that emotion. Deep acting on the other hand refers to internal change and involves trying to feel and display the required emotion by reappraising the situation or by *positive refocus*

(directing attention onto positive aspects to regulate feelings). This can lead to feelings of inauthenticity amongst call centre employees.

In its functional capacity, emotional labour can serve to facilitate task effectiveness by providing the service worker with a means to regulate what are often dynamic and emergent interactions and thus provide the worker with a sense of increased self-efficacy. Emotional labour makes interactions with customers more predictable, and allows the service worker to maintain objectivity and emotional equilibrium by cognitively distancing him/herself from the implicated emotion (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993).

Emotional labour may also facilitate self expression by enabling the service worker to “project at least some of the authentic self into the enactment” (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993, p94). On the other hand, emotional labour can become dysfunctional for the worker when dissonance between felt emotions and displayed emotions is experienced. This incongruence between feeling and action, may ultimately lead to lowered self-esteem, depression, cynicism, and alienation from work. Similarly, self-alienation may result when the agent ceases to recognize or even feel authentic emotions (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Lewig and Dollard, 2003).

(Zapf et al., 1999) propose that the requirement to display positive emotions, negative emotions, and sensitivity requirements are not necessarily stressful but may become so through emotional dissonance.

Jobs that expose agents to high levels of emotional dissonance, such as having to deal with angry or aggressive customers and displaying positive emotions inconsistent with those genuinely experienced, may potentially be assisted through the provision of a range of key resources. Emotional dissonance affects all human service workers, even though they may vary in the extent to which their work involves lasting relationships with clients/customers, and in the amount of training they have received to deal with client/customer-related social stressors. For example health professionals typically develop long-lasting relationships with their clients, whereas call centre workers may have only a single brief interaction. In accordance with contemporary theories of work stress (effort – reward imbalance, demand – control -support), (Dollard, Dormann, Boyd, Winefield & Winefield, 2003) argue that social support and training designed to develop role separation are crucial resources needed to help service workers cope with the unique emotion stressors of their jobs.

Call centre work requires constant interaction with customers, and the requirement to regulate emotions at work. It is not unusual to experience constant abuse from angry customers, and in these situations the call centre agent must maintain organizational standards with respect to customer service—adherence to the organizational value that the customer is always right. Paradoxically, while the unique role of the call centre is the creation and maintenance of good customer relationships, call centres themselves have evolved in response to significant technological advances as well as global demands for cost-cutting initiatives. The call centre agent is therefore faced with the opposing goals of

optimizing productivity while delivering superior customer service (Lewig and Dollard, 2003).

Call centre agents are employed in jobs with sustained customer contact and few opportunities to vary the nature of their displayed feelings, could cause high levels of stress and could affect their psychological well –being.

Dormann and Zijlstra (2003) state that employees are paid by organizations to display (usually positive) emotions towards customers irrespective of their current feelings. Call centre employees should make customers feel as if they are really interested in the customers' problems, and be friendly as if they are happy to talk to them. Empirical evidence for the beneficial effects of emotion work on customers does not yet exist, but its detrimental effects on call centre agents' health is demonstrated by (Lewig and Dollard, 2003) and by (Grebner, Semmer, Faso, Gut, Ka' lin, and Elfering, 2003). The development of technical systems in call centres, has typically dominated the development of the social system, with sometimes detrimental effects on call centre employees.

Ojha and Kasturi (2005) mention that soft skills are more important than technical skills in a call centre as people with good soft skills are more capable of coping with the nature of the pressures of work. Certain persons are more likely to fit the requirements of customer service work. Outgoing or extravert individuals are better suited to this form of

interactive work because of their sociable personalities. It is increasingly recognised that there needs to be a shift towards extra-functional skills to cope with the demands of a call centre.

Deery and Kinnie (2004) mention that management want people who can continually communicate with energy and enthusiasm, who can recognise nuances in conversations with customers and who can vary their voice accordingly. Deery and Kinnie (2004) further mention the importance of customer related or social skills in recruitment and selection.

These skills include “the ability to remain calm under pressure, having a friendly positive and tactful attitude, active listening and being patient and empathetic particularly when customers are upset” (Deery & Kinnie, 2004, p8). These qualities in a call centre agent, are important, as s/he has to be able to extract all the necessary information for action, while carrying on a courteous conversation. The agent needs to have the ability to clarify and pinpoint customer requirements without letting the caller get even further upset (Ojha and Kasturi, 2005).

In addition, employees are often required to follow a tightly scripted dialogue with customers and have to conform to highly detailed instructions. The close monitoring of words and manners and the limited variation that employees are often allowed in service interactions has meant that call centre workers have lost a large measure of control over

their self-presentation to customers. This has left them with little flexibility in negotiating their interactions with customers (Deary et al, 2002).

Indeed the involvement of the customer as a third party in the work process brings added complexity to the employer-employee relationship. In some cases the customer can be enlisted by management to jointly supervise the employee. Not only can they be solicited to provide feedback on the quality of the service that is being delivered, they may unilaterally lodge complaints about the service provider. Furthermore, the customer can “reinforce management's control efforts, reprimanding workers for dawdling or behaving rudely ... and complaining to workers' superiors when service ... [does] not meet their expectations” (Fuller and Smith 1996, p. 84 cited in Deary et al, 2002). Furthermore, the introduction of the customer as a mechanism of control has resulted in employees gaining ‘an additional boss’. Moreover, this has occurred in a context of rising customer expectations about service quality which have often been highly primed by the organisations themselves (Deary et al, 2002).

The customer may also bring a certain degree of tension to the work environment. They may be abusive and irritating and their demands may be unreasonable. For some employees, their daily work experience is often one of a series of minor complaints assuming major proportions for the customer. In order to manage these situations and protect themselves from abuse or ill treatment, employees are often encouraged to suppress their true feelings and emotionally detach themselves from hostile or difficult customers. This disjuncture between what employees might feel towards their customers

and what they are expected to display may prove difficult to resolve and may cause some anxiety (Wharton, 1993).

Customers' perceptions of quality service are significantly affected by the nature of the interaction with front line staff. Indeed, the quality of the interaction is often the service provided (Leidner, 1996). The behaviour of the employee is therefore central to the success of the service transaction (Deary et al, 2002).

However, when customers are rude or aggressive and when employees are required to adhere to quite rigid rules on self-presentation it can cause emotional distress.

Supervisors are often monitoring service employees to ensure organizational control over emotional expression, with 'service with a smile' as the goal. Positive expressions of emotions by employees can create favourable impressions in customer's minds while negative attitudes expressed by employees can similarly create unfavourable impressions. Thus, the way in which employees are managed will ultimately affect the service recipient.

(Deary, Iverson & Walsh, 2002) mention that the incidence of customer abuse (or phone rage) is said to have increased sharply. A study conducted in the United Kingdom found that the main reason for phone rage was an insincere tone of voice from the person handling the query. Within this context, (Deary et al, 2002) mention that customers are now able to discern the difference between genuine quality service and feigned quality service. Of course where employees are required to express emotions they do not feel or

where they attempt to change their mood to match the organisation's rules they may sound insincere to the customer. This feigned quality often results in negative consequences for the call centre agent.

Moreover, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) state that customer perceptions of good service hinge on more than mechanical conformity with display rules. "They hinge on the extent to which the service agent conveys a sense of genuine interpersonal sensitivity and concern. The establishment of this emotional rapport cannot simply be mandated by the organization" (Deery & Kinnie, 2004, p9).

Being the target of frequent hostility from the same people for whom you are supposed to be providing 'service with a smile' requires constant emotion regulation that may eventually deplete one's resources. Furthermore, the mantra 'the customer is always right' communicates the unequal power in the customer-employee transaction, which is also a key aspect of being a target of aggression.

In South Africa, customer experience agents are now being employed in certain organisations for example, banks. These agents comprise of blind and partially sighted people whose job is to analyse the nuances and tones in the voices of customers and call centre agents. These people detect nuances and tones in a person's voice that sighted people would not necessarily detect. This is used as a strategy to improve customer service and ensure that call centre agents are more empathetic when dealing with customers on the phone. From the voice analyses the blind staff are able to work with the

quality assurance department in helping call centre agents identify where they can improve their telephone manner when dealing with irate and angry customers (Rondganger, 2007).

It is clear from the above, that emotional suppression can have a profound impact on a call centre agent's physical and psychological well being, and is therefore an important variable in this study. Employees may have feelings of frustration, resentment, and anger, which are not appropriate to express. These feelings result, in part, from the constant requirement to monitor one's negative emotions and express positive ones. Intense emotions can only be contained for a limited time. If not given a healthy expressive outlet, this emotional repression can profoundly affect a call centre agent's behaviour and could result in possible forms of deviant behaviour in the work and non work domains. It is for this reason that deviant behaviour is a significant aspect in this study and will be discussed in the following chapter.

The ideas expressed in this chapter will be returned to in chapter e, of part 2 of this research report.

Chapter c)

Deviant Behaviour in the call centre environment

The extensive use of ICT (information and communication technology) in call centres allows for the direct and indirect measurement of a wide variety of operational metrics without any explicit human effort on the part of the supervisor or management. At one level this makes call centre management easier and key decision makers have rich operational information to make decisions. However, at another level incorrect use of metrics may encourage call centre agents to indulge in behaviour that might hurt rather than help the organization (Ojha and Kasturi, 2005).

Employees are recognising opportunities to engage in activities that impede management's ultimate goal of running a profitable venture and cooperating with team members to engage in these activities. Also important is the recognition by employees that there are appropriate times and occasions to engage in such activities. Team members rationally examine the opportunities they have to engage in such actions and the benefits and costs of their actions. After this rationalisation, team members then determine whether the activity is worthwhile (Appelbaum and Shapiro, 2006).

It would be safe to assume that while it is true that employees suffer from a negative work environment, it is also true that organizations themselves, suffer from the behaviour of their employees. (Appelbaum and Girard, 2007) state that this behaviour is known as

deviant behaviour. There is a growing interest among researchers as well as corporate executives concerning deviant behaviours in organisations.

Not only because of the enormous costs related to these behaviours, but also the social and psychological effects deviant behaviours have on the workplace. Deviant behaviour can be defined as “voluntary behaviour that violates significant organisational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organisation, its members, or both” (Appelbaum and Girard, 2007, p23).

Research in call centres indicate that call centre agents found numerous ways to engage in deviant behaviour (Van Den Broek, 2004). It suggests that the extensive use of employee surveillance and monitoring may have increased management’s ability to pace and measure employee output, however these developments could not be viewed as the totalisation of labour control or the end of the employee voice. Van Den Broek (2004) further states that employees are not demobilised by managerial directives, but rather respond within the mechanisms available to them.

Despite managers best efforts, call centre agents may not consent to managerial control practices. They may have different ideas about how the call centre should be run and will probably disagree with practices viewed as damaging. Employees, according to Van Den Broek (2004), have found an array of deviant methods to cope with their working conditions.

“Call centre workers may disregard the organisations scripted conversational rules and may search for weaknesses in the organisation’s control systems and construct free spaces for themselves which provide an amnesty from normal emotional labours” (Deery and Kinnie,2004,p13). Perhaps, the most pervasive action taken by many call centre agents is that of hanging up on offensive customers or deliberately redirecting calls to other areas of the corporation. Other examples of misbehaviour include entering misleading activity codes into the system and intentionally misinforming and lying to customers (Holman, 2005).

Although not informed about when their calls are being monitored, call centre agents learn to recognise when monitoring was being undertaken and adjusted their behaviour accordingly. By identifying when leaders are absent on the floor and when monitoring was occurring, Van den Broek (2004) states that these agents are tacitly foiling managerial directives.

Ojha and Kasturi (2005) state that several call centre agents, who otherwise might be able to cope with the level of stress in their work, do not cope well with difficult or angry customers. These agents dislike dealing with difficult customers, and would like to avoid providing a service to them however, this study has not provided any research evidence to support this statement. A study conducted by (Deary et al, 2002) states that the incidence of customer abuse (or phone rage) has increased sharply due to the higher expectations of customers who dislike dealing with an impersonal agent over the phone.

Ojha and Kasturi (2005) further state that when agents face abusive and difficult customers it causes emotional distress. Cutting off calls from difficult customers and withholding service to complicated and uncooperative callers are some of the means by which agents avoid dealing with difficult customers. An agent who avoids difficult customers is likely to indulge in such behaviour as soon as s/he assesses the customer as someone who would be difficult to satisfy and this could be detrimental to the quality of service.

In a further study conducted by Townsend (2005), resistance was uncovered that clearly indicated that employees engage in activities to maintain some level of control over the labour process. The ability to 'bump' calls if the call centre agent is not ready for a call is one of these activities. However, employees are fully aware that this practice has negative consequences. Employees speak of feeling guilty when they 'bump' a caller. The reason for this guilt is that after waiting on hold and finally reaching the front of the queue, when 'bumped' the customer is then sent to the back of the call queue. In addition to this, the number of bumped calls is a measure of which the management takes notice. Hence, team members are very strategic in the use of such tactics. Commonly referred to times for such an activity is a few minutes before the end of shifts and leading into breaks.

Call centre agents are recognising opportunities to engage in activities that impede management's ultimate goal of running a profitable venture and cooperating with team member's to engage in these activities. Also important is the recognition by employees

that there are appropriate times and occasions to engage in such activities. Furthermore, call centre agents share among their team the information to 'trick' the system and actively resist managerial controls for the short to medium-term productivity gains and, hence, the benefit of the organisation.

As is the case with research into 'deviant behaviour' or resistance, employees do not always inform researchers of the 'tricks' they utilise to resist managerial controls. In order to alleviate this methodological shortcoming, the investment of time assists in developing relationships with participants, and more rich data is often forthcoming (Townsend, 2005).

Knights & McCabe (1998) mention another form of deviant behaviour which takes place in call centres. Staff 'appear' to be answering the phone when the lights are flashing. Instead, they simply put their head-sets on, and mouthed words so as to escape control. Although 'mouthing words' as an expression of resistance is clearly a demeaning dramaturgical exercise, rather than an overt challenge to management, it is none the less an act of defiance.

Thus, we can see that there are cycles of control and resistance wherein management feign concern with the welfare of employees while seeking enhanced control, and employees feign compliance while often resisting some of the demands of management.

There are various forms of control and surveillance that is supposed to leave employee resistance futile. Information technology systems can provide management with a wealth of data that will assist in determining many strategic business processes. Such systems

also allow a level of invisible surveillance over the workforce that would potentially disable any employee misbehaviour. When the potentially coercive nature of a team structure is utilised, the traditional simple control of the line supervisor is replaced with peer control where every member of the team is supervising his or her fellow workers in the interests of management (Townsend,2005).

However, the case study conducted by Townsend (2005) demonstrates that call centre workers are examples of employees who are not entirely trapped within the panoptic gaze of the electronic surveillance systems. It was found that, some team members have ‘turned the tables’ on management and use their team cohesiveness to challenge managerial prerogative.

This research by Townsend (2005) has provided numerous examples of employees who spend time and energy finding ways to manipulate the system to engage in activities of resistance. In addition, it has also considered important differences within teams in the same workplace. Where employees are faced with technology and work processes that provide limited opportunity for controlling the speed and content of work and social interactions, employees are more likely to engage in modes of resistance geared towards getting the better of the machine.

In light of the above, it is clear that while there is considerable compliance with managerial directives, employee deviance is by no means marginal and is therefore an important variable in this study.

Irrespective of the increased control over staff through information technology-based surveillance and monitoring systems, management is not able to secure total control nor to eradicate the spaces of employee resistance. Even when ostensibly conforming to management controls, there are numerous means by which employees are able to retain or create some autonomous space.

In addition to deviant behaviour, attributions outside of work could be made by call centre agents. After a 'bad day' it is quite likely that the affected agent may project irritability and nastiness into the behaviour of others rather than admit to irritable behaviour of their own. As a consequence, they interpret innocuous behaviours of others as being negative whereas another observer, participant or rater might not.

The ideas expressed in this chapter will be returned to in chapter e (data analysis and results chapter) of Part 2 of this research report. The main issues raised in part 1 thus far, will be summarised in the opening chapter, chapter d (rationale and procedure chapter) of part 2.

The following chapter, chapter d will present a discussion of the rationale and procedures carried out in the present research.

Part 2: Present Research

Chapter d)

Rationale and Procedure

This chapter describes the rationale and research methodology that will be undertaken to investigate the research question. It describes how the qualitative data will be collected and analysed in this study. This chapter includes the details of the sample and participants, the instruments used and the procedure that was followed.

It is clear from the studies mentioned in part 1 (Deary et al, 2002; Ojha & Kasturi, 2005; Townsend, 2005; Deery & Kinnie, 2004; Lewig & Dollard, 2003) that regulating the emotions of employees in a call centre can have a negative impact on their well being. If not given a healthy expressive outlet, this emotional repression can profoundly affect the behaviour of call centre agents and could result in possible forms of deviant behaviour. An understanding of whether this emotional suppression contributes to deviant behaviours at work or attributions outside of work is therefore important. An appreciation of this, therefore has academic and applied value.

This research will have an impact in South Africa more particularly with regard to the area of call centres. It is also aimed at describing employee work experiences in the call centre environment. This research hopes to contribute to a larger body of knowledge on emotional suppression and deviant behaviours.

Consequently, the research question is as follows:

1) To what extent does emotional suppression which is required of a call centre agent contribute to deviant behaviours at work or in spill over/displacement behaviour and attributions outside of work?

Methods

a) Procedure and Sampling

This section provides a description of the procedure for the data gathering endeavour. It also describes the sample including demographic information.

A pilot study was conducted on approximately 4 people working in the area of telecommunications to see if they follow the structure of the questions, the flow of the questions and the relevance of the questions. These questions are the basis of the interview schedule and have been used to interview participants working in the call centre. The pilot study enabled the researcher to ascertain whether there were difficulties with understanding any of the questions proposed.

This is a qualitative based research. A call centre in Johannesburg, South Africa was used to conduct this research. This call centre provides leading client service to Retail Banking, Corporate Banking and Business Banking chosen markets. This service is

delivered out of a centralised business by a team of call centre agents, using advanced technology and processes.

Call centre agents working in this call centre were used in this study. In order to obtain a sample of 17 participants, the call centre was approached and the researcher explained the details of the research to management/supervisors in order to get approval to conduct the research. Once approval was obtained, an internal memorandum was sent out explaining the details of the research to staff. Interviews have been used to gather information. It was arranged with management what time and which days the interviews would take place. The researcher interviewed interested call centre employees one day in a week over a period of three weeks. 7 employees were interviewed from the Retail Banking call centre and 10 were interviewed from the Corporate Banking call centre.

All call centre agents working in this call centre are between the ages of 18 to 34.

Participants have been working in this call centre between 5 months to one and a half years, with the longest working for 3 years. Participants have all passed matric, have been trained and take up to 700 calls per month. Participants communicate with clients in English. Employees in this call centre are monitored on the number of calls taken, the average handling time per call and the average wrap-up time per call. Their work hours are from 08h00am to 17h00pm Monday to Friday and on a Saturday from 08h00am to 12h00pm.

The interviews took place in the call centre environment and formed the basis of the study. Interviews were between 20 to 30 minutes each. Participation was voluntary and confidentiality was assured. The interview was not heard by any other person other than the researcher. Informed consent for the interview and informed consent for recording was also obtained from participants.

Participant's responses were written down, and a tape recorder was used as a supplementary source. Recorded information and transcripts are kept in a safe, private location. The recorded tapes and transcripts will be destroyed upon completion of the degree.

As mentioned earlier participation was voluntary, as such 17 participants volunteered to participate in the research. A non - probability purposive sample of 17 call centre employees has thus been used for this research and is a suitable and appropriate sample size for qualitative research of this type. In addition the number of participants used in this research is sufficient in terms of allowing for responses to be summarised and compared across individuals. The demographic composition of the sample in this study are 8 black females, 2 Black males, 2 Indian females, 2 Indian males, 1 White female, 1 Coloured female and 1 Coloured male.

Non probability purposive samples are those which result when the researcher handpicks the elements to be included in the sample. The individuals selected may be those judged to have certain characteristics or those who are likely to be able to provide useful

information for the purposes for which the study is being done (Babbie and Mouton, 2005).

b) Instruments

A structured interview schedule consisting of a variety of open - ended and close- ended questions has been used to interview participants. A copy of the interview schedule is attached to the research report and is entitled 'Appendix A'. Out of 60 questions, 7 of them are open- ended questions and the remainder are closed- ended questions. The questions are intended to elicit short answers that can be summarized and compared across individuals. The interview schedule has been developed by the researcher in relation to literature being reviewed on emotional suppression and deviant behaviours. The various forms of deviant behaviours were extracted from a reading by Holman (2005) and Van Den Broek (2004). The questions have been organised into themes, and a pattern or theme will emerge from the answers obtained in the interview.

The use of this qualitative methodology is recommended in research of this nature due to the depth of understanding and detail that it elicits (Babbie and Mouton, 2004).

c) Ethical Considerations

The present research was presented to the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand in order to obtain ethical approval. Once the faculty had read through the intended study, permission was granted to conduct the study.

Participation in this study was voluntary; confidentiality was assured as the interviews were not heard by any person other than the researcher. Informed consent was obtained from the participants to be interviewed. Informed consent for recording was also obtained from participants. Anonymity, cannot be assured as the researcher is conducting interviews. However, the researcher has protected the identity of those involved in the interview. No identifying information of the participant's has been reported. Recorded tapes and transcripts used in the interview are kept in a safe, private location and will be destroyed upon completion of the degree.

The next chapter will explain the data analysis techniques employed in this study and will also discuss the results of the present study.

Chapter e)

Data Analysis and Results

This chapter will explain the analysis techniques that were applied to the data and will further explain the results of the present study. Content analysis and Thematic content analysis have been used to analyse the data.

In order to analyse the closed ended questions appropriately, content analysis has been used. This is a broad term that includes any kind of analysis where communication content (speech, written text, interviews) is categorized and classified (Holsti, 1969). A pattern or theme will emerge from the answers obtained in the interview as the questions have been organised into themes already.

The open ended questions have been analysed using thematic content analysis. Thematic content analysis is the term used to describe a more clearly interpretive application of content analysis, in which the focus is upon thematic content, which is identified, categorised and elaborated upon based on systematic scrutiny (Boyatzis, 1998).

Thematic content analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a qualitative method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data. It is a method that organises and describes data in detail and it also often interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). Unlike other qualitative methods, such as grounded theory and discourse analysis, thematic analysis does not require theoretical or

technological knowledge of approaches. It can therefore be used within different theoretical frameworks (Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) claim that thematic analysis can be an essentialist or realist method, reporting experiences, meanings and reality of participants. This analysis is appropriate for the open ended questions in this data as the researcher will be able to extract meaning from the responses of the participants. The analysis of the interviews will reveal the extent to which emotional suppression contributes to deviant behaviours at work or in spill over/displacement behaviour and attributions outside of work.

Results

The data yielded from this study are set out in Tables 1 (including sub tables 1.1 to 1.8) to 61. The tables will describe patterns of participant's responses.

The tables are represented as sub issues. Table 1.1 deals with patterns of responses of call centre agents dealing with rude difficult and hostile customers. Table 1.2 deals with patterns of responses of call centre agents dealing with emotional suppression. Table 1.3 deals with patterns of responses of call centre agent's interaction with customers and electronic performance monitoring. Tables 1.4 to 1.6 deals with pattern of responses of call centre agent's interaction with customers and deviant behaviour. Finally tables 1.7 and 1.8 deals with pattern of responses of deviant behaviour and attributions made outside of work. These tables are important as they present an analysis that show patterns or themes that emerge for various significant aspects of the study.

The patterns from Table1 which refers to overall pattern of responses for closed ended questions will be described first, thereafter each subsequent table will be explained in detail.

Table 1: Overall pattern of responses to closed ended questions

0 = no, 1 = yes, 2 = both, 3 = management, 4 = customer, 5 = no person, 6 = myself, 1-60 =closed-ended questions

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1.In your experience are customers ever rude, irritable or aggressive on the phone	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
2.Do you ever deal with hostile or difficult customers	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.Do they ever scream and shout at you	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5.If you have not dealt with customers of this kind do you of anyone who has	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6.If customers are rude to you, are you allowed to shout back at them	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Would you like to shout back at them	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
9.Have you ever shouted back at them	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
10.Do you know of anyone who has	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
12.Are you allowed to express your true emotions to customers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13.Do you suppress your true emotions or what you feel when you speak to customers	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
14.Do you appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if you don't feel that way	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
15Are you required to appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if you don't feel that way.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 1 continued

16.Are you expected to express only positive emotions when dealing with customers	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
17.Are you expected to suppress any negative emotions or feelings	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
18.Does suppressing your emotions make you angry	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
19.Does it make you angry at management/supervisors, customers or both	3	3	6	3	4	2	3	2	5	5	4	2	4	2	2	2	3	
20.Do you feel frustrated when you have to bottle up your emotions	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	
21.Does this emotional regulation create resentment at management, customers etc.	5	5	2	3	3	3	3	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	
22.Are you given training on how to act and manage yourself when you speak to customers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
23.Do you have to follow a scripted dialogue when dealing with customers that are upset or difficult	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	
24.Do you ever feel like not following those instructions and just speak normally	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	
25.Have you ever departed from these set procedures	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	
26.Would you like some control or flexibility over your interactions with customers	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
27.When you dealing with customers are you being monitored by your supervisors	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	
28.Are you conscious of electronic performance monitoring (EPM)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
29.Do you think about EPM when dealing with customers that are especially difficult	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	

Table 1 continued

30. Have you ever felt like cutting customers off that are rude, difficult, offensive etc.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
31. Have you ever done that	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
32. Do you know of anyone who has done that	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
33. Have you ever felt like redirecting calls to other departments knowing they cant deal with the call	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
34. Have you actually redirected calls to other departments knowing they cant deal with the call	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
35. Do you know of anyone who has done that.	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
36. Have you ever felt like not following the script.	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
37. Have you ever not followed it	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
38. Do you know of anyone who hasn't followed it	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
39. Have you ever felt like pretending to speak to a customer	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
40. Do you pretend speaking to customers	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
41. Do you know of anyone who does that	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
42. Have you ever felt like cheating the IT system	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
43. Have you ever cheated the IT system	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Table 1 continued

44.Do you know of anyone who has	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
45.Have you ever felt like not filling in information properly	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
46.Have you ever not filled in information properly	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
47.Do you know of anyone who doesn't fill in information properly	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
48.Have you ever felt like lying or misinforming customers	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
49.Have you ever lied or misinformed customers	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
50.Do you know of anyone who has	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
51.Have you ever felt like challenging targets set	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
52.Have you ever challenged targets set	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
53.Do you know of anyone who has	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
58.Are other motorists aggressive around you	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
59.Are other people irritable around you	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
60.Does your family act differently around you when you come back from work	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0

- Questions are contained in the appendix
- A full discussion of patterns and questions that generate the responses are contained in the text.
- Shading of matrix cells refer to patterns of responses shared across individuals

Table 1.1: Patterns for question 1 to 6 dealing with rude, hostile customers

Closed- ended questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1.In your experience are customers ever rude, irritable or aggressive on the phone	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
2.Do you ever deal with hostile or difficult customers	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.Do they ever scream and shout at you	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5.If you have not dealt with customers of this kind do you of anyone who has	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6.If customers are rude to you, are you allowed to shout back at them	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1.2: Patterns for questions 12 to 18 dealing with emotional suppression

Closed- ended questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
12.Are you allowed to express your true emotions to customers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13.Do you suppress your true emotions or what you feel when you speak to customers	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
14.Do you appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if you don't feel that way	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
15Are you required to appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if you don't feel that way.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
T 16.Are you expected to express only positive emotions when dealing with customers	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
17.Are you expected to suppress any negative emotions or feelings	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
18.Does suppressing your emotions make you angry	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 1.3: Patterns for questions 22 to 28 dealing with call centre agents interaction with customers and EPM

Closed- ended questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
22.Are you given training on how to act and manage yourself when you speak to customers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
23.Do you have to follow a scripted dialogue when dealing with customers that are upset or difficult	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
24.Do you ever feel like not following those instructions and just speak normally	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
25.Have you ever departed from these set procedures	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
26.Would you like some control or flexibility over your interactions with customers	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
27.When you dealing with customers are you being monitored by your supervisors	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
28.Are you conscious of electronic performance monitoring (EPM)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 1.4: Patterns for question 26 to 31 dealing with interactions of call centre agents and deviant behaviour

Closed- ended questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
26.Would you like some control or flexibility over your interactions with customers	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
27.When you dealing with customers are you being monitored by your supervisors	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
28.Are you conscious of electronic performance monitoring (EPM)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
29.Do you think about EPM when dealing with customers that are especially difficult	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
30.Have you ever felt like cutting customers off that are rude, difficult, offensive etc.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
31.Have you ever done that	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1.5: Patterns for questions 35 to 41 dealing with forms of deviant behaviour

Closed- ended questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
35.Do you know of anyone who has done that.	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
36.Have you ever felt like not following the script.	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
37.Have you ever not followed it	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
38.Do you know of anyone who hasn't followed it	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
39.Have you ever felt like pretending to speak to a customer	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
40.Do you pretend speaking to customers	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
41.Do you know of anyone who does that	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
43.Have you ever cheated the IT system	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Table1.6: Patterns of responses for questions 51, 53 and 58

Closed- ended questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
51.Have you ever felt like challenging targets set	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
53.Do you know of anyone who has	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
58.Are other motorists aggressive around you	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1

Table 1.7: Pattern of responses for question 51 to 58 dealing with deviant behaviour and attributions made outside of work

Closed- ended questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
51.Have you ever felt like challenging targets set	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
52.Have you ever challenged targets set	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
53.Do you know of anyone who has	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
58.Are other motorists aggressive around you	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1

Table 1.8: Patterns of responses for questions 51 to 60 dealing with deviant behaviour and attributions made outside of work

Closed- ended questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
51.Have you ever felt like challenging targets set	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
52.Have you ever challenged targets set	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
53.Do you know of anyone who has	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
58.Are other motorists aggressive around you	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
59.Are other people irritable around you	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
60.Does your family act differently around you when you come back from work	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0

From table 1 on pages 38 to 41 which refers to overall pattern of responses for closed ended questions, certain patterns can be observed. For questions one to five which refer to rude, difficult and hostile customers (refer to table 1 on page 38 or table 1.1 on page 42), all participants except person two, four and fourteen responded in the same way. This means that they have all experienced dealing with customers that are rude, aggressive and irritable on the phone. In addition, they have all dealt with hostile or difficult customers who scream and shout at them, and all participants know of other call centre agents that they have worked with who have dealt with customers of this kind.

For question six, (refer to table 1 on page 38 or table 1.1 on page 42) which asked whether call centre agents are allowed to shout back at customers who are rude to them all participants answered in the same way, which was that they are not allowed to shout back at customers. Results indicate for question eight (refer to table 1 on page 38) that all participants would like to shout back except participant's one and ten. In addition, it can be seen from table 1 on page 38 that none of the participants have shouted back except participant's eight and sixteen.

For question twelve, (refer to table 1 on page 38 or 1.2 on page 43) which dealt with whether call centre agents are allowed to express their true emotions to customers, all participants had the same response which was that they are not allowed to do so. For question thirteen to eighteen which also dealt with the aspect of emotional suppression (refer to table 1 on page 38/39 or table 1.2 on page 43), participants one, two, six, seven, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fifteen, sixteen and seventeen had the same response which was

that they all do suppress their true emotions when they speak to customers; they all appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if they do not feel that way; they are also *required* to appear happy and enthusiastic even if they don't feel that way; furthermore, they are expected to express only positive emotions when dealing with customers and are also expected to suppress negative emotions or feelings.

For question twenty two, (refer to table 1 on page 39 or table 1.3 on page 44) which dealt with training of call centre agents, all participants had the same response. This means that all participants are given training on how to act and manage themselves when they speak to customers. Participants four, five, six, seven and thirteen had the same responses for questions twenty three to twenty seven. These questions deal with call centre agents interactions with customers and monitoring by supervisors. (refer to table 1 on page 39 or table 1.3 on page 44). The responses were the same in that, participants had to follow a scripted dialogue or follow a set of instructions when dealing with customers that are upset or difficult; they all felt like not following those instructions and would like to speak normally and they have all departed from those set procedures. In addition those participants would like some control or flexibility in their interactions with customers and furthermore they are all being monitored by their supervisors when dealing with customers. Patterns on table 1 on page 39 and table 1.3 on page 44 also show that participants responded in the same way for question twenty eight in that all participants are conscious of electronic performance monitoring.

Interestingly, for questions twenty six to thirty one (refer to table 1 on page 39 and 40 or table 1.4 on page 45), participants thirteen to seventeen had the same response. This means that these participants would also like flexibility in their interactions with customers; they are monitored by their supervisors when speaking to customers; they are conscious of electronic performance monitoring or call quality management and they think about electronic performance monitoring/ call quality management when interacting with customers especially difficult customers. In addition, participants thirteen to seventeen, have all felt like cutting customers off when they are rude and offensive, however, none of them have actually done that.

Question thirty which refers to a particular type of deviant behaviour (cutting customers off who are rude and offensive) all participants answered the same by stating that they all *felt* like cutting customers off that are rude, difficult and offensive. (refer to table 1 on page 40 or table 1.4 on page 45).

From table 1 on pages 40 and 41, patterns indicate that for deviant behaviour, person three has *felt* like cutting rude, difficult customers off, has cut customers off and knows of other people that cut rude customers off. This participant has also *felt* like redirecting calls to other departments knowing they are unable to deal with the call, has redirected calls to other departments and knows of other agents that do the same. This participant has also *felt* like not following the script, has not followed it and knows of other agents that do not follow the script. In addition, this participant has *felt* like pretending to speak to a customer but no one is on the line, has actually done that and knows of other people

that do the same. Interestingly, this participant has not *felt* like cheating the IT system, but has cheated the IT system and knows of other call centre agents that do the same. Furthermore, participant three has not *felt* like not filling information in properly, he has not filled it in properly and knows of other people that do not fill in information properly. This participant has *felt* like lying or misinforming customers, has lied and misinformed customers and knows of call centre agents that do and lastly this participant has *felt* like challenging targets set, has challenged targets set and knows of other people that do the same. Other participants have engaged in deviant behaviours, however this is the only participant who has consistently engaged in every form of deviant behaviour mentioned in the questions.

For questions thirty five to forty one which deals with deviant behaviour (refer to table 1 on page 40 or table 1.5 on page 46), persons two, four, seven, eight and sixteen answered the same. These participants know of call centre agents who have redirected calls to other departments knowing that those departments would not be able to deal with the call. In addition, these participants, have also not felt like following the script; they have actually engaged in this type of deviant behaviour by not following the script and they are aware of other call centre agents that they work with that do not follow the script. Interestingly, the same participants (two, four, seven, eight and sixteen), have not ever felt like pretending to speak to customers but no one is on the line (another form of deviant behaviour); they have also not engaged in this kind of deviant behaviour and furthermore do not know of other call centre agents that do this. Table 1.5 on page 46 further shows a pattern of answers for participant's two, four, five as well as participant's seven to

thirteen for questions thirty nine, forty and forty one. This means that none of these participants' ever felt like pretending to speak to someone but no one's on the line, they have not engaged in this kind of deviant behaviour and they are not aware of other agents that engage in this sort of behaviour.

Participant's two to nine also answered the same for questions thirty six and thirty seven. (refer to table 1 on page 40 or table 1.5 on page 46). This means that these participants all felt like not following the script (a form of deviant behaviour) and all of them have actually not followed the script.

From table 1 on page 40 and table 1.5 on page 46, patterns indicate that for question forty three, all participants except participant's one, three and sixteen have not cheated the IT system.

The patterns from table 1.6 on page 47 indicate that participants one to six, nine, eleven, fifteen and sixteen also have the same response for questions fifty one, fifty three and fifty eight (which deals with a form of deviant behaviour and attributions made outside of work. (Refer to appendix 'A' for questions or table 1.6 on page 47) Patterns indicate that these participants have also felt like challenging targets set; they know of other call centre agents that challenge targets set and find other motorists aggressive around them.

Even more patterns are visible for participants one to six, nine and sixteen who responded in exactly the same manner for questions fifty one, fifty two, fifty three and fifty eight.

(Refer to table 1.7 on page 48). This means that participants one to six, nine and sixteen have all *felt* like challenging targets set (a form of deviant behaviour), they have all challenged targets set, they all know of other agents they work with that challenge targets set and they all make attributions in that they find other motorists aggressive around them.

Persons one, three, four, five and sixteen also had the same response for questions fifty one, fifty two, fifty three, fifty eight ,fifty nine and sixty.(refer to table 1.8 on page 49). The responses are the same in that they all felt like challenging targets set; they actually have challenged targets set and they all know of other call centre agents that they work with that challenge targets set. They also all agree that motorists are aggressive around them, in addition, other people are not irritable around them and their family does not act differently around them when they come home from work.

Patterns found in table 1 including sub tables 1.1 to 1.8 have been discussed above. The next part of this chapter will discuss the subsequent tables that follow. (Tables 2 to 61)

The results from the interviews conducted indicate that all of the participants/ call centre agents in this sample except two have experienced dealing with customers that are rude, aggressive and irritable on the phone. Furthermore, all participants except one agree to dealing with hostile and difficult customers. (Refer to table 2 and 3 on page 56).

(Tables 2 to 6 deal with rude, difficult and hostile customers)

Table 2

Question 1	Yes	No
In your experience are customers ever rude, aggressive or irritable on the phone?	(15)	(2)

Table 3:

Question 2	Yes	No
Do you ever deal with hostile or difficult customers?	(16)	(1)

Fifteen of the seventeen participants mentioned that customers scream and shout at them.(refer to table 4 on page 57). Table 5 on page 57 summarises the responses from participants in terms of how often they deal with customers that scream and shout at them on a daily basis. The responses vary for example, four participants stated that this takes place twice or thrice a day, and one participant mentioned that this sort of customer is dealt with three times in a week, except for one participant, all of them deal with customers of this sort.

Table 4

Question 3	Yes	No
Do they ever scream and shout at you?	(15)	(2)

Table 5

Question 4: How often do you deal with customers of this sort on a daily basis?	No of people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning and afternoon • Some of my calls 	(1) (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of 10 calls, 3 are irate • Don't deal with them 	(3) (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of calls • Out of 60 calls maybe 5 of them 	(1) (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 to 8 times a day • Out of 30 calls about 10 of them 	(1) (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or Three on average a day • Once a week 	(4) (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three times a week • Four or Five times a day 	(1) (1)

All participants including those who have not dealt with customers that scream and shout, know about other call centre agents that have dealt with customers of this sort.(refer to table 6 on page 58). It is clear from this sample that call centre agents do interact with rude and difficult customers, and if they have not, they know other call centre agents who have.

Table 6

Question 5	Yes	No
If you have not dealt with customers of this kind do you know of anyone who has?	(17)	(0)

All call centre agents in this sample are not allowed to shout back at customers that are rude to them. (Refer to table 7 on page 58).The reasons for this are summarised in table 8 on page 59. Responses do vary, however there is an underlying theme. One participant mentioned that “we cant shout back as it will taint the image of the company”, another participant mentioned “we have to be pleasant because they (the customer) bring in revenue” and a further three participants stated “the customer is always right, we not allowed to shout as it is against company policy”. The theme that emerges from the responses is that call centre agents should maintain their professionalism and in doing so maintain the professionalism of the Company they working for. Participants also seem to justify customers shouting at them by acknowledging that it is the nature of the business and part of their job description.

(Table 7 to 12 deals with rude customers)

Table 7

Question 6	Yes	No
If customers are rude at you are you allowed to shout back at them?	(0)	(17)

Table 8

Question 7: If not why?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in a bank, not good to be rude to clients. • It's part of your job description. • It's our duty to focus on the call. We try not to match their anger and we offering a service to the client. • Tainting the image of the Company. • I'm there to provide a solution to their problems. • We value them as clients. • We can put the client on hold, scream, shout and when we calm then attend to them. • Customers are always right, you can't raise your voice, if they vulgar we drop the phone. Mostly we don't say anything • They are the customer, we have to be pleasant because they bring in revenue. 	(1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's the nature of the business. We have to acknowledge what they say. They have a right to shout at me. • Customer is always right. Not allowed to shout.and its against company policy • We should make them understand and help them. • We should maintain our professionalism. • It's the service industry, we have to take the punishment. • Calls are listened into, the customer is King. 	(1) (3) (1) (1) (1) (1)

Fifteen of the seventeen participants in this sample would like to shout back at rude customers. (Refer to table 9 on page 59). Only two of the seventeen participants have actually shouted back at customers. (Refer to table 10 on page 59). It was also found that nine participants know of other call centre agents that shout at customers (Refer to table 11 on page 60).

Table 9

Question 8	Yes	No
Would you like to shout back at them?	(15)	(2)

Table 10

Question 9	Yes	No
Have you ever shouted back at them?	(2)	(15)

Table 11

Question 10	Yes	No
Do you know anyone who does?	(9)	(8)

In addition, participants elaborated upon the ways in which they would like to deal with difficult, rude and abusive customers. The responses are summarised in table 12 on page 61. It was found that four participants would like to speak their mind and say exactly how they feel at the time, three participants would like to be more assertive, one of which stated “after you speak to a client it would be a good idea to use a punching bag”. A similar theme emerges for eight of the participants in that they would like to maintain their professionalism and that of the Company when dealing with customers, one of which stated “we have to advise them and we cannot do anything negative as it will affect the company’s integrity”. Two of the participants feel that the way in which customers are dealt with at the moment, is the only way that works. It is clear from above that the responses are different when trying to ascertain the ways in which they would like to deal with difficult customers.

Table 12

Question 11: How would you like to deal with abusive, rude, difficult customers?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the only way that works. • They mad at the business not me. • I would like to be professional. • It depends what they irate about, sometimes they just irritable. I would give them all the information they need. • Just listen I suppose. • After you speak to a client use a punching bag. Also be more assertive. • Say exactly what you feel at the time. • Give it back to them, speak your mind • Speak calmly, patiently but also assertive. 	(1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (2) (2) (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise them, Cant do anything negative as it will affect the company's integrity. • They must give me what I need to assist them properly. • I would like to assist in a polite way its not easy though. • Clients don't listen, refer problem to team leader. • Be assertive 	(1) (1) (2) (1) (1)

Emotional suppression as mentioned in chapter a, is one of the main variables in this study. The results for emotional suppression will be discussed below.

It was found that all participants are not allowed to express their true emotions when interacting with customers. (Refer to table 13 on page 61). When asked whether participants do suppress their emotions, it was found that fourteen of the seventeen actually do (Refer to table 14 on page 62).

(Table 13 to 22 deals with emotional suppression of call centre agents_

Table 13

Question 12	Yes	No
Are you allowed to express your true emotions to customers?	(0)	(17)

Table 14

Question 13	Yes	No
Do you suppress your true emotions or what you feel when you speak to customers?	(14)	(3)

Fourteen of the participants appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if they do not feel that way (Refer to table 15 on page 62). It was further agreed by all seventeen participants that they are also *required* to appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if they do not feel that way (Refer to table 16 on page 62).

Table 15

Question 14	Yes	No
Do you appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if you don't feel that way?	(14)	(2)

Table 16

Question 15	Yes	No
Are you required to appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if you don't feel that way?	(17)	(0)

Sixteen of the participants stated that it is expected of them to express only positive emotions (Refer to table 17 on page 62), and all participants stated that they are expected to suppress negative emotions or feelings (Refer to table 18 on page 63).

Table 17

Question 16	Yes	No
Are you expected to express only positive emotions when dealing with customers?	(16)	(1)

Table 18

Question 17	Yes	No
Are you expected to suppress negative emotions or feelings?	(17)	(0)

Furthermore, fifteen of the seventeen participants felt that suppressing their emotions or not being able to display their true feelings makes them angry. (Refer to table 19 on page 63). It was found that six of the seventeen participants were angry at both management and customers, five were angry at management, three were angry at the customer, two were not angry and one was angry at themselves (Refer to table 20 on page 63).

Table 19

Question 18	Yes	No
Does suppressing your emotions or not being able to display your true feelings make you angry?	(15)	(2)

Table 20

Question 19: If so, does it make you angry at management/ supervisors, customers or both?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both • Management • Customer • No person • Myself 	 (6) (5) (3) (2) (1)

Twelve of the seventeen participants feel frustrated for having to bottle up their emotions. (Refer to table 21 on page 64). Four participants felt that this creates resentment at management, two participants feel that it creates resentment towards customers, one stated that it creates resentment at both management and customers and ten stated that

emotional regulation does not create resentment at any person. (Refer to table 22 on page 64).

Table 21

Question 20	Yes	No
Do you feel frustrated when you have to bottle up your emotions?	(12)	(5)

Table 22

Question 21: Does this emotional regulation create resentment at management, customers etc.?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No person • Customers • Management • Both 	(10) (2) (4) (1)

Furthermore, it was found that all participants are given training on how to act and manage themselves when they speak to customers (Refer to table 23 on page 64). In addition twelve participants agree that they have to follow a scripted dialogue or follow a set of instructions when dealing with customers that are difficult or upset (Refer to table 24 on page 65).

(Tables 23 to 28 deals with call centre agent’s interaction with customers)

Table 23

Question 22	Yes	No
Are you given training on how to act and manage yourself when you speak to customers?	(17)	(0)

Table 24

Question 23	Yes	No
Do you have to follow a scripted dialogue or follow a set of instructions when you dealing with customers that are difficult or upset?	(12)	(5)

Fifteen of the participants feel like not following those instructions and would like to speak normally (Refer to table 25 on page 65) and eleven of the seventeen participants have departed from following those set procedures (Refer to table 26 on page 65).

Table 25

Question 24	Yes	No
Do you ever feel like not following those instructions and just speak normally?	(15)	(2)

Table 26

Question 25	Yes	No
Have you ever departed from these set procedures?	(11)	(6)

Results also indicate that sixteen of the seventeen participants would like to have some control or flexibility in their interactions with customers (Refer to table 27 on page 65).

Table 27

Question 26	Yes	No
Would you like to have some control or flexibility over your interactions with customers?	(16)	(1)

During telephone interactions with customers, twelve of the seventeen participants are being monitored by their supervisors (Refer to table 28 on page 66).

Table 28

Question 27	Yes	No
When you dealing with customers are you being monitored by your supervisors?	(12)	(5)

All participants are conscious of electronic performance monitoring or call quality management. Furthermore, fourteen of the seventeen participants think about electronic performance monitoring when dealing with customers especially difficult customers (Refer to table 29 on page 66).

Tables 29 deals with electronic performance monitoring

Question 28	Yes	No
Are you conscious of electronic performance monitoring or call quality management?	(17)	
Question 29	Yes	No
Do you think about electronic performance monitoring when dealing with customers, especially difficult customers?	(14)	(3)

Deviant behaviour was also discussed as an important variable in this study. The results for deviant behaviour will be discussed below.

All participants felt like cutting customers off when they are rude, difficult and offensive (Refer to table 30 on page 67) but only four participants actually engaged in that behaviour (Refer to table 31 on page 67) however eight participants knew of other call

centre agents that they have worked with that do cut customers off when they are rude, difficult or offensive (Refer to table 32 on page 67).

(Tables 30 to 53 deal with deviant behaviours call centre agents feel like engaging in, actually engage in and know of other people that engage in them)

Table 30

Question 30	Yes	No
Have you ever felt like cutting customers off when they are rude, difficult, offensive etc?	(17)	(0)

Table 31

Question 31	Yes	No
Have you ever done that?	(4)	(13)

Table 32

Question 32	Yes	No
Do you know of anyone that has done that?	(8)	(9)

Nine participants felt like redirecting calls to other departments knowing that they would not be able to deal with the call (Refer to table 33 on page 68). Five participants have actually redirected calls to other departments knowing they are unable to deal with the call (Refer to table 34 on page 68) and twelve participants knew of other call centre

agents they worked with that engage in this kind of behaviour.(Refer to table 35 on page 68).

Table 33

Question 33	Yes	No
Have you ever felt like redirecting calls to other departments knowing that they would not be able to deal with the call?	(9)	(8)

Table 34

Question 34	Yes	No
Have you actually redirected calls to other departments knowing that they would not be able to deal with the call?	(5)	(12)

Table 35

Question 35	Yes	No
Do you know anyone that has done that?	(12)	(5)

Thirteen participants felt like not following the script (Refer to table 36 on page 68) and twelve participants have actually not followed the script (Refer to table 37 on page 69) In addition ten participants are aware or know of other call centre agents that they work with that do not follow the script (Refer to table 38 on page 69).

Table 36

Question 36	Yes	No
Have you ever felt like not following the script?	(13)	(4)

Table 37

Question 37	Yes	No
Have you ever not followed it?	(12)	(5)

Table 38

Question 38	Yes	No
Do you know of anyone who hasn't followed the script?	(10)	(7)

Four participants have felt like pretending to speak to customers (mouthing words but no one is on the line). (Refer to table 39 on page 69). Four of the participants have actually done that (Refer to table 40 on page 69).and six participants know of other call centre agents that they work with that engages in this kind of behaviour (Refer to table 41 on page 70).

Table 39

Question 39	Yes	No
Have you ever felt like pretending to speak to customers?	(4)	(13)

Table 40

Question 40	Yes	No
Do you pretend speaking to customers?	(4)	(13)

Table 41

Question 41	Yes	No
Do you know of anyone who pretends like they speaking to customers?	(6)	(11)

Ten participants have felt like cheating the IT (information technology) system (Refer to table 42 on page 70). Three participants have actually cheated the IT system (Refer to table 43 on page 70) and seven participants know of other call centre agents they have worked with that cheat the IT system.(Refer to table 44 on page 70).

Table 42

Question 42	Yes	No
Have you ever felt like cheating the IT system?	(10)	(7)

Table 43

Question 43	Yes	No
Have you ever cheated the IT system?	(3)	(14)

Table 44

Question 44	Yes	No
Do you know anyone who has cheated the IT system?	(7)	(10)

Nine participants feel like not filling in information properly (Refer to table 45 on page 71). Seven participants have actually not filled in information properly (Refer to table 46 on page 71) and thirteen participants know of other call centre agents that they work with who does not fill in information properly (Refer to table 47 on page 71).

Table 45

Question 45	Yes	No
Have you ever felt like not filling in information properly?	(9)	(8)

Table 46

Question 46	Yes	No
Have you ever not filled in information properly?	(7)	(10)

Table 47

Question 47	Yes	No
Do you know of anyone who does not fill in information properly?	(13)	(4)

Eight participants have felt like lying or misinforming customers (Refer to table 48 on page 72). Four participants have actually lied or misinformed customers (Refer to table 49 on page 72) and eleven participants know of other call centre agents that they work with that lie or misinform customers (Refer to table 50 on page 72).

Table 48

Question 48	Yes	No
Have you ever felt like lying or misinforming customers?	(8)	(9)

Table 49

Question 49	Yes	No
Have you ever lied or misinformed customers?	(4)	(13)

Table 50

Question 50	Yes	No
Do you know of anyone who has?	(11)	(6)

Sixteen participants have felt like challenging targets set (Refer to table 51 on page 72). Twelve participants have actually challenged targets set (refer to table 52 on page 73) and thirteen participants know of other call centre agents they work with that challenge targets set.(Refer to table 53 on page 73).

Table 51

Question 51	Yes	No
Have you ever felt like challenging targets set?	(16)	(1)

Table 52

Question 52	Yes	No
Have you ever challenged targets set?	(12)	(5)

Table 53

Question 53	Yes	No
Do you know anyone who does challenge targets?	(13)	(4)

In each category of deviant behaviour mentioned above, results indicated that call centre agents engage in deviant behaviour, furthermore, in each category participants knew of other call centre agents that engage in deviant behaviour. Table 54 on page 73 gives a list of deviant behaviours actually engaged in by call centre employees in this sample.

Table 54: Deviant behaviour actually engaged in by call centre agents

Deviant behaviour	No of agents
Cutting customers off that are rude, difficult, hostile etc.	(4)
Redirecting calls to other departments knowing they cannot handle the call	(5)
Not following the script	(12)
Pretending to speak to customers but noone on the line	(4)
Cheating the IT system	(3)
Not filling information in properly	(7)
Lying or misinforming customers	(4)
Challenging targets set	(12)

The other forms of deviant behaviour that participants mentioned they or other call centre agents they work with engage in vary. Refer to table 55 on page 75 for the full list of behaviours.

The most common one that four participants mentioned was putting clients on hold or on mute for a long time without attending to them in the hope that the client will hang up. One participant said that “agents swear and shout while client is on mute and will not attend to the client and will wait for the client to hang up” Another participant mentioned that “call agents do not assist clients completely and they have to call back or they give clients different numbers to call” (very similar to redirecting the call knowing that the other person/department cannot deal with the call). Another form of deviant behaviour mentioned is “when a call comes through to an agent he/she does not take the call and puts the call back in the queue”. Another participants stated “when agents log on to a system there is a button to press for ready and not ready. Agents press not ready even though they are logged on so they cannot take calls”.

There is a clear indication that call centre agents in this sample partake in deviant behaviour and know of other agents they work with that engage in deviant behaviour.

Table 55 : Other forms of deviant behaviour engaged in by call centre agents

<p>Question 54: Can you tell me of any other forms of deviant behaviour that you or anyone else may engage in other than those mentioned above?</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading other peoples emails. • Put clients on mute or on hold for a long time hoping client will hang up. • Call centre agent openly criticized the company because of frustration and got fires as he damaged the Company name. • Some call agents that are there for awhile downstage the new agents in the presence of supervisors • Don't know of any that take place • Pretending to be busy while you not 	<p>(1) (4) (1) (1) (3) (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep during work hours while headset is on and a attitude with clients, not audible to them but people around you can see. • Not allowed to eat at the desk but people sneak in food • When a call comes through to an agent he/she puts the call back in the queue and doesn't take the call. • Don't assist client completely and they have to call back or give them different numbers. • Agents swear and shout while client is on mute and wait for them to hang up. • When agents log on to system there is a button for ready and not ready. Agents press not ready even though they logged on so they can't take calls. 	<p>(1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1)</p>

After a long day at work, four participants stated that “they would like to run out of here (i.e the call centre) and go home” Most participants are tired and exhausted, one participant mentioned “I am tired, exhausted and I do not get a chance to lash out” (refer to table 56 on page 75 to find emotions felt by call centre agents after a long day at work).

Table 56: Emotions felt after a long day at work

<p>Question 55: How do you feel after a long day at work?</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tired and moody • Run out of here and go home • Exhausted • Tired, exhausted, less talkative • Tired, exhausted, don't get a chance to lash out 	<p>(1) (4) (2) (2) (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tired and angry • Tired • Looking forward to another day • Tired don't want to talk 	<p>(1) (4) (1) (1)</p>

After a long day having dealt with hostile customers, only two participants felt unaffected by the situation and a further two felt good if they managed to calm the irate customer down the remainder of the participants are angry, frustrated and irritable. One participant said “I want to find the customer and strangle them”. Another said “It takes a lot out of you, exhausted, frustrated, want to jump out the window”. One other participant stated “I get a chance to lash out at home” and another stated “if they say you dumb you feel that way”.(refer to table 57 on page 76 to find emotions felt by call centre agents after a long day at work having dealt with hostile customers).

Table 57: Emotions felt after dealing with hostile customers

Question 56: How do you feel after a long day at work having dealt with hostile customers?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruins your mood for the whole day. (1) • Frustrated (1) • They don't affect me I find them funny. (1) • Irritated (2) • Just one of those things you deal with it. (1) • Angry, upset. Sometimes I want to find the customer and strangle them. (1) • Don't want to come to work, frustrated. (1) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a chance to lash out at home. (1) • Feel good if I calmed them down. (1) • Don't want to hear anything, frustrated (1) • Depressed, frustrated, if they say you dumb you feel that way (1) • Upset and angry (1) • Want to go home (1) • Miserable, angry and irritable. (1) • Frustrated with clients but if you manage to calm them down you feel good. (1) • Takes a lot of you, exhausted, frustrated. We deal with clients who don't know their own work. Want to jump out the window (1) 	

This is a clear indication that after dealing with hostile customers, the emotional well being of call centre agents are negatively affected.

Nine of the seventeen participants in the sample feel that dealing with hostile customers affect how they deal with people after work (refer to table 58 on page 77).

Table 58: Interactions with people after work

Question 57: Does it affect how you deal with people after work?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • As soon as I walk out the door, everything stays there at work. • No • Yes, I snap at people because I bottle everything up. • Sometimes. After work I want to be myself. I avoid phone calls 	<p>(2) (1) (7) (1) (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first two hours after work does affect how I deal with people. • I'm very irritable with people after work. • It does affect partly affect how I deal with people. Don't want to discuss work. • Sometimes it does, not all the time 	<p>(1) (1) (1) (2)</p>

The results for whether participants in this sample have made attributions outside of work due to emotional suppression will be discussed.

Results indicate that thirteen of the seventeen participants found other motorists aggressive around themselves (refer to table 59 on page 77) In addition, nine participants stated that other people are irritable around themselves, (refer to table 60 on page 78) however only four participants stated that their family acts differently around them when they come back from work (refer to table 61 on page 78). In the first two scenarios, (refer to table 59 on page 77 and table 60 on page 78) it seems that most of the participants are projecting their emotions on to others, and in the last scenario, (refer to table 61 on page 78) only four participants seem to project their emotions on to others.

(Tables 59 to 61 deals with attributions made outside of work due to emotional suppression).

Table 59

Question 58	Yes	No
Are other motorists aggressive around you?	(13)	(4)

Table 60

Question 59	Yes	No
Are other people irritable around you?	(9)	(8)

Table 61

Question 60	Yes	No
Does your family act differently around you when you come back from work?	(4)	(13)

Chapter f

Discussion of results

This chapter will discuss the important findings from the previous chapter in the context of the research considered in Part 1 of this research report. A discussion of limitations is presented before the implications of these research findings have been discussed. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

The findings from the previous chapter indicate that call centre employees deal with difficult and hostile customers and they know of other call centre agents that they work with that deal with customers of this kind (refer to table 3 on page 56 and table 6 on page 58). These call centre employees are not allowed to shout back at customers that are rude and abusive towards them even though most of the call centre employees in this sample would like to do so (refer to table 7 on page 58 and table 9 on page 59). This study is different when compared to the literature on emotional suppression mentioned in chapter b of this research report (Deery and Kinnie, 2004; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Deary et al, 2002; Leidner, 1993; Holman, 2005; Ojha and Kasturi, 2005; Wilk and Moynihan, 2005) in that it highlights that call centre agent's in this study would like to shout back at rude and abusive customers. It is not unusual to experience constant abuse from angry customers, and in these situations the call centre agent is expected to maintain organizational standards with respect to customer service and adherence to the organizational value that the customer is always right (Lewig & Dollard, 2003).

During service transactions, employees are expected to display emotions that comply with certain norms or standards of the organisation, designed to create a desired state of mind in the customer. Participants in this study are not allowed to express their true emotions when interacting with customers (refer to table 13 on page 61). Most participants suppress their true emotions when speaking to customers (refer to table 14 on page 62). In addition, they are required to appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if they don't feel that way (refer to table 16 on page 62). They are also expected to express only positive emotions and suppress any negative emotions or feelings (refer to table 18 on page 63). Furthermore, most call centre agents in this sample are frustrated for having to bottle up their emotions or feelings and are angry at both management and customers (refer to table 20 on page 63 and 21 on page 64).

This study supports the findings by Wilk and Moynihan (2005) and (Thomas et al, 2004). mentioned in Chapter b of this research report. The present study is the same in that results indicate that call centre workers are expected to express positive emotions and suppress negative emotions in their telephone interactions with customers. Customers should not be able to tell for example, if a call centre worker is unhappy. Regulation and management of feelings is of utmost importance (Thompson, Callaghan & Van den Broek, 2004). Employees are expected to appear happy, nice and glad to serve the customer in spite of any private misgivings or any different feelings they may have, an aspect that most service providers, including call centre agents, find very stressful, among other emotionally demanding and stressful aspects of their work.

The results of this study further support the findings of (Deary et al, 2002) mentioned in chapter b of this research report. In this study most employees are often required to follow a tightly scripted dialogue with customers and have to conform to highly detailed instructions (refer to table 24 on page 65). Both these studies(the present research and the study conducted by (Deary et al, 2002) have found that the close monitoring of words and manners and the limited variation that employees are often allowed in service interactions has meant that call centre workers have lost a large measure of control over their self-presentation to customers. Results also indicate that sixteen of the seventeen participants would like a certain degree of control or flexibility in their interactions with customers (refer to table 27 on page 65).

Findings also indicate that most call centre employees in this sample are being monitored by supervisors when dealing with customers (refer to table 28 on page 66). Supervisors are often monitoring service employees to ensure organizational control over emotional expression, with 'service with a smile' as the goal (Deary et al, 2002).

In addition, all call centre employees are conscious of electronic performance monitoring and most of the call centre employees in this study think about it especially when dealing with a difficult customer (refer to table 29 on page 66). With computer technology such as electronic performance monitoring, work can automatically be allocated to call centre agents to minimise waiting time, the speed of work can continuously be measured and the quality of the interaction between customer and service provider can be assessed remotely and at management's discretion (Thompson et al, 2004). The results from this

research are again similar to the study conducted by (Deary et al, 2002) mentioned in chapter b of this research report in that not only are call centre agents being physically monitored by their supervisors, the quality of interaction between call centre agent and customer is being jointly supervised by both management and customer.

Despite manager's best efforts, call centre agents may not consent to managerial control practices. They may have different ideas about how the call centre should be run and will probably disagree with practices viewed as damaging. The findings from this study regarding deviant behaviour support those of Van Den Broek (2004) and Holman (2005) mentioned in chapter c of this research report which mentioned an array of deviant forms of behaviour that call centre employees engage in to cope with their working conditions.

Some participants in this sample have cut customers off that are rude, difficult and offensive; have redirected calls to other departments knowing that those departments would not be able to deal with the call; have disregarded the organisations scripted conversational rules; have challenged targets set; have lied and misinformed customers; have not filled in information properly and have also cheated the information technology system (refer to table 54 on page 73). Cheating the IT system is also in line with the study conducted by Townsend (2005) mentioned in chapter c of this research report which indicated that customers that are on hold and who have reached the front of the queue are sent to the back of the queue by call centre agents. A participant in the present study mentioned that this is a form of deviant behaviour that is engaged in, in an attempt to

cheat the IT system. Employees are more likely to engage in modes of resistance geared towards getting the better of the machine.

Another form of deviant behaviour mentioned in the present study is employees pretending to speak to customers (refer to table 54 on page 73). This type of deviant behaviour found in this study support and confirm the research conducted by (Knights and McCabe, 1998). The research is the same in that call centre employees appear to be answering the phone when the lights are flashing. Instead, they simply put their head-sets on, and mouth words. This expression of resistance is clearly a demeaning exercise, but nonetheless an act of defiance.

The present research differs from previous research and at the same time expands on research in the area of deviant behaviours in call centres (Holman, 2005 and Van den Broek, 2004) as each category of deviant behaviour mentioned, participants not only engaged in deviant behaviour but felt like engaging in those forms of deviant behaviour mentioned and knew of other call centre agents that they work with that engage in those forms of deviant behaviour (refer to tables 30 to 53 on pages 67 to 73).

Findings from this study also identify and expand on other forms of deviant behaviour not mentioned in the literature on deviant behaviours that call centre employees engage in (refer to table 55 on page 75). We can thus see that there are cycles of control and resistance wherein management feign concern with the welfare of employees while

seeking enhanced control, and employees feign compliance while often resisting some of the demands of management (Townsend, 2005).

After a long day having dealt with hostile customers, most participants in this sample feel angry, frustrated and irritable (refer to table 57 on page 76). This is a clear indication that after dealing with hostile customers, the emotional well being of call centre agents are negatively affected. Most participants felt that their interactions with people after work are affected by them dealing with hostile and rude customers (refer to table 58 on page 77).

The most notable difference in the present research in relation to previous research mentioned in Chapter b of this research report is that this research includes findings of attributions made outside of work due to emotional suppression of call centre agent's. It is suspected that people experiencing emotional suppression may well not act out their emotions but project them onto others. In terms of attributions made outside of work due to emotional suppression, findings indicate that for questions fifty eight (Are other motorists aggressive around you?) and fifty nine (Are other people irritable around you?) it seems that most participants are projecting their emotions onto others and for question sixty (does your family act differently around you when you come back from work?) only four participants seemed to project their emotions onto others (refer to tables 59 to 61 on pages 77 and 78).

After a 'bad day' it is quite likely that the affected agent may project irritability and nastiness into the behaviour of others rather than admit to irritable behaviour of their own. As a consequence, they interpret innocuous behaviours of others as being negative whereas another observer, participant or rater might not.

The present research underscores the importance of exploring the aspects of emotional suppression and deviant behaviour of call centre agents in the workplace. Furthermore, the present research provides strong evidence for deviant behaviours engaged in which are often only assumed as a matter of a priori reasoning or vague allusion. In terms of answering the research question and in light of the results, this research has found that due to emotional suppression, certain call centre employees in this sample do engage in deviant behaviours at work and make attributions outside of work.

While organisations would definitely benefit from the knowledge that this research would provide them, it is also imperative that society in general learn about emotional suppression and deviant behaviour, since these aspects may directly or indirectly affect people external to the organization on a personal level as well.

Limitations

An anticipated difficulty would be to determine the extent (in terms of a percentage) to which emotional suppression contributes to deviant behaviours in the work environment. It must be borne in mind, that emotional suppression is one of many reasons that may account for why call centre agents engage in deviant behaviour. Precision and exactitude in analysing its impact may accordingly not be attainable.

The methodology employed for the present research could also be a limitation in that it is a qualitative based research. Perhaps including a quantitative aspect to this research could have provided more in-depth results.

The demographic characteristics of the sample in terms of gender, was limited in terms of the number of males that were included in the sample.

In addition, the Hawthorne effect could be a limitation in this research as participants could be dishonest in their responses during the interview and provide the researcher with responses that are expected as opposed to responses that are true.

Implications for future research

First, an appreciation of this research has academic and applied value. Second, this research will have an impact in South Africa more particularly with regard to the area of

call centres. It is also aimed at describing employee work experiences in the call centre environment. Third, this research hopes to contribute to a larger body of knowledge on emotional suppression and deviant behaviours.

Fourth, it may stimulate further research in the context of call centres. These findings add to the literature in a significant way and underscore the importance of exploring the emotional aspects of the work environment and looking at their possible interactions with other job characteristics. Studies conducted on the same or similar terms may yield results that confirm, expand upon or even contradict the results obtained in this research.

Conclusion

Call centre staff play a critical role in the management of customer relationships and are also held accountable for their emotions. Although call centres offer organisations a number of clear benefits, the benefits for those employed in them are less clear. For many call centre employees, work is stressful and emotionally demanding.

It is these workplace experiences that are thought to contribute to the high levels of staff turnover in the call centre industry and have led some to label call centres as electronic sweatshops (Holman, 2005). Authors such as Stuller (1999) follow the belief that executives higher on understanding the feelings of their employees are more likely to achieve business outcomes and be considered as effective leaders by their employees as well as their managers. Employees should no longer be considered biological machines

that are able to leave their feelings, norms and attitudes at home when they come to work everyday.

Emotional Suppression and deviant behaviour are emerging as key issues in modern work settings. Theories of work stress can thus be improved by taking account of occupation specific demands and the broader social and economic environment within which contemporary workers operate. Further, a deeper understanding of emotional labour and its role in service work may be achieved by placing it within the framework of organizational psychological models of work stress.

As the demand for call centre staff grows, it will be the organizations that provide healthy work environments that attract and retain the most valuable workers. Both employees and organizations alike can benefit from the creation of service jobs that enrich the working lives of call centre workers (Lewig and Dollard, 2003).

One is left with the question by communicating without expression, what is the real price of the phone call?

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Schedule

(First a colloquial definition of deviant behaviour and emotional suppression has been given instead of a theoretical definition as this is easier to understand)

- 1) In your experience are customers ever rude, aggressive and irritable on the phone?
- 2) Do you ever deal with hostile or difficult customers?
- 3) Do they ever scream and shout at you ?
- 4) How often do you deal with customers of this sort on a daily basis?
- 5) If you have not dealt with customers of this kind, do you know of anyone who has?

- 6) If customers are rude to you
- 7) Are you allowed to shout back at them?
- 8) If not, Why?
- 9) Would you like to shout back at them?
- 10) Have you ever shouted back at them?
- 11) Do you know of anyone who does?
- 12) How would you like to deal with abusive, rude, difficult customers?

- 13) Are you allowed to express your true emotions to customers?
- 14) Do you suppress your true emotions or what you feel when you speak to customers?
- 15) Do you appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if you don't feel that way?
- 16) Are you required to appear happy and enthusiastic to serve a customer even if you don't feel that way?
- 17) Are you expected to express only positive emotions when dealing with customers?
- 18) Are you expected to suppress any negative emotions or feelings?
- 19) Does suppressing your emotions or not being able to display your true feelings make you angry?
- 20) If so, does it make you angry at the customer, management/supervisors or both?

- 21) Do you feel frustrated when you have to bottle up your emotions?

- 22) Does this emotional regulation create resentment at management, customers etc.?
- 23) Are you given training on how to act and manage yourself when you speak to customers?
- 24) Do you have to follow a scripted dialogue or follow a set of instructions when you dealing with customers that are upset or difficult?
- 25) If so, do you ever feel like not following those instructions and just speak normally?
- 26) Have you ever departed from these set procedures?
- 27) Would you like to have some control or flexibility over your interactions with customers?
- 28) When you dealing with customers are you being monitored by your supervisors?
- 29) Are you conscious of electronic performance monitoring?
- 30) Do you think about electronic performance monitoring when dealing with customers especially difficult customers?

- 31) Have you ever felt like cutting customers off when they are rude, difficult, and offensive etc.?
- 32) Have you ever done that?
- 33) Do you know of anyone that has done that?

- 34) Have you ever felt like redirecting calls to other departments knowing that they would not be able to deal with the call?
- 35) Have you actually redirected calls to other departments knowing that they would not be able to deal with the call?
- 36) Do you know of anyone that has done that?

- 37) Have you ever felt like not following the script?
- 38) Have you ever not followed it?
- 39) Do you know of anyone who hasn't followed the script?

- 40) Have you ever felt like pretending to speak to customers?
- 41) Do you pretend speaking to customers?

42) Do you know of anyone who pretends like they speaking to customers?

43) Have you felt like cheating the IT system?

44) Have you ever cheated the IT system?

45) Do you know of anyone who has?

46) Have you ever felt like not filling in information properly?

47) Have you ever not filled in information properly?

48) Do you know of anyone who doesn't fill in information properly?

49) Have you ever felt like lying or misinforming customers?

50) Have you ever lied or misinformed customers?

51) Do you know of anyone who has?

53) Have you ever felt like challenging targets set?

54) Have you ever challenged targets set?

55) Do you know of anyone who has?

56) Can you tell me of any other forms of deviant behaviour that you or anyone else may engage in other than those mentioned?

57) How do you feel after a long day of work?

58) How do you feel after a long day at work having dealt with hostile customers?

59) Does it affect how you deal with people after work?

60) Are other motorists aggressive around you?

61) Are other people irritable around you?

62) Does your family act differently around you when you come back from work?

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

July 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Shaakirah Dockrat and I am a postgraduate student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting a research study in partial fulfilment of my Masters degree in Industrial Psychology.

My area of research aims to analyse whether the emotional regulation or suppression of call centre employees in response to customer aggression or abuse contributes to behaviours that negatively affect the organisation, its employees or both given the demands for friendly service in the work environment. Regulating the emotions of employees in a call centre can have a negative impact on their well being. If not given a healthy expressive outlet, this emotional repression can profoundly affect our behaviours. An understanding of whether this emotional suppression contributes to deviant behaviours is therefore important

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Participation in this study involves being interviewed by the researcher. Interviews will take place in the context of the call centre environment and will take approximately 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary, and no employee will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not to participate. Confidentiality is assured as the recorded interview will not be heard by any person at any time, and will only be processed by myself. 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. There is no risk of job loss or any other institutional sanctions.

Anyone who chooses to participate will have to sign an informed consent form to be interviewed as well as a consent form to be recorded. Feedback will be given to the individuals who participated in the study once the research is complete. Findings will also be reported in a research report. The recorded tapes will be kept in a safe, private location and will be destroyed upon completion of the degree.

This research will contribute to a larger body of knowledge on emotional suppression and negative behaviours in the workplace.

Should you have any queries regarding this study, I can be contacted on 082 943 8460 or e-mailed at shaakirah@boda.co.za. Alternatively, my supervisor, Professor James Fisher can be contacted by email at james.fisher@wits.ac.za.

Kind Regards

Shaakirah Dockrat

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO ORGANISATION

July 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Shaakirah Dockrat and I am a postgraduate student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting a research study in partial fulfilment of my Masters degree in Industrial Psychology.

My area of research aims to analyse whether the emotional regulation or suppression of call centre employees in response to customer aggression or abuse contributes to behaviours which negatively affect the organisation, its members or both, given the demands for friendly service in the work environment.

In this regard I hereby/ respectfully request your organisation to assist me by providing me access to your organisations call centre in order for me to conduct my proposed research. I would like to interview 20 employees working in your organisations call centre. The interviews will take approximately 30 minutes each and will take place within the context of the call centre environment. Participation is voluntary and confidentiality is assured. I would be pleased if a meeting could be arranged at a mutually convenient time with the relevant members of management of your Company to discuss this further as well as to answer any questions or concerns you might have.

As well as the research report required for my degree, the main findings of the study will be sent to you in the form of an executive summary

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you require any further information please contact me on 0829438460 or email me at shaakirah@boda.co.za.

Kind Regards

Shaakirah Dockrat

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

Consent form: Interview

I _____ consent to being interviewed by

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.
- There are no risks or benefits associated with this study.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report.
- My responses will remain confidential, although I may be quoted in the research report.
- I am aware that the results of the study will be reported in the form of a research report for the partial completion of the degree, Master of Art in Industrial Psychology.
- I am also aware that the results may also be presented at a conference and written up for publication in a psychology journal.

Signed: _____

Date : _____

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM FOR RECORDING

Consent form: Recording

I _____ hereby give consent for my interview
with _____ to be tape-recorded for her study
on _____ I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any other person other than the researcher.
- The tapes and transcripts will be kept in a safe place for the duration of the study and will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.
- Direct quotes from my interview may be used in the research report, but I will not be identified by name.
- I am aware that the results of the study will be reported in the form of a research report for the partial completion of the degree, Master of Arts in Industrial Psychology.
- I am also aware that the results may also be presented at conference and written up for publication in a psychology journal.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F

LETTER FROM ORGANISATION



To whom it may concern,

Nedbank Corporate Client Services herewith confirm that Shakira Dockrat was allowed access to our staff to conduct interviews in lieu of her research and did so post completing to a confidentiality agreement

Kobus le Roux
Head: NCCS



NEDBANK
CORPORATE

CORPORATE SHARED SERVICES • NCCS

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Directors: Dr RJ Khoza (Chairman) Prof MM Katz (Vice-chairman) ML Ndlovu (Vice-chairman) TA Boardman (Chief Executive) CJW Ball MWT Brown TCP Chikane
BE Davison N Dennis† MA Enus-Brey Prof B de L Figaji RM Head† JB Magwaza ME Mkwanazi CML Savage GT Sorobe JH Sutcliffe† (†British)
Company Secretary: GS Ntshaber 30 11.2006

We subscribe to the Code of Banking Practice of The Banking Association South Africa and, for unresolved disputes, support resolution through the Ombudsman for Banking Services
We are an authorised financial services provider We are a registered credit provider in terms of the National Credit Act (NCR Reg No NCRCP16)

A Member of the OLD MUTUAL Group

APPENDIX G

LIST OF TABLES

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Table 1.2: Pattern of responses for questions 12 to 18 dealing with emotional suppression

Table 1.3: Pattern of responses for questions 22 to 28 dealing with call centre agents interaction with customers and EPM

Table 1.4: Pattern of responses for questions 26 to 31 dealing with interactions of call centre agents and deviant behaviour

Table 1.5: Pattern of responses for questions 35 to 41 dealing with forms of deviant behaviour

Table 1.6: Pattern of responses for questions 51, 53 and 58 dealing with forms deviant behaviour

Table 1.7: Pattern of responses for questions 51 to 58 dealing with deviant behaviour and attributions made outside of work

Table 1.8: Pattern of responses for questions 51 to 60 dealing with deviant behaviour and attributions made outside of work

Tables 2 to 6: Responses to questions dealing with rude, difficult and hostile customers

Tables 7 to 12: Responses to questions dealing with rude customers

Tables 13 to 22: Responses to questions dealing with emotional suppression of call centre agents

Tables 23 to 28: Responses to questions dealing with rude call centre agent's interaction with customers

Table 29: Responses to questions dealing with electronic performance monitoring

Table 30 to 53: Responses to questions dealing with deviant behaviours

Table 54: Deviant behaviour actually engaged in by call centre agents

Table 55: Other forms of deviant behaviour engaged in by call centre agents

Table 56: Responses to emotions felt after a long day at work

Table 57: Responses to emotions felt after dealing with hostile customers

Table 58: Interactions with people after work

Table 59 to 61: Responses to attributions made outside of work due to emotional suppression