

**CONTROL, ALIENATION, COMMITMENT AND  
SATISFACTION AMONGST CALL CENTRE  
WORKERS**

**ED ROSE**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirement of Liverpool John Moores University for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**July 2009**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by Professor Gillian Wright. Her invaluable advice, encouragement and support were instrumental in making this project a success. In particular, her help in making sense of the complexities of SPSS guaranteed the accomplishment of the methods and methodological stages of the research. My heartfelt thanks and eternal gratitude go to her.

In addition, my thanks go to the numerous friends and colleagues for providing advice and support throughout.



## **DEDICATION**

**This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Tina. Without Tina's support and encouragement I would not have written this thesis.**

# **ABSTRACT**

## **Control, Alienation, Commitment and Satisfaction amongst Call Centre Workers**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the research for this thesis is to respond to the following research questions and to test the hypotheses which stem from the second research question. The research questions are:

1. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the concepts and constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?
2. What is the nature of the association between the concepts and constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?

### **Methodology and Research Design**

A mixed method research design was devised, based upon piloted exploratory research. The main survey instrument was the questionnaire. The questionnaire responses were analysed and subject to confirmatory factor analysis.

### **Findings**

Ten hypotheses were tested and largely supported. The results demonstrate strong associations between the main constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction and also with their subsidiary constructs.

### **Limitations and Implications**

The main theoretical limitation of this research concerns both alienation and control. The exclusive focus upon control within the formalised workplace context of the call centre taken by the research is without reference to wider societal control relationships and structures, and as such could pose limitations in terms of generalising the research results. With regard to alienation, this research attempts to measure some alienation components in the tradition of Blauner (1964) and Seeman (1959), and hence poses the problem of whether reducing the alienation concept to measurable components is valid within the context of the wider discussion of alienation as an inherent societal condition, thereby leaving this research open to the charge of methodological reductivism.

### **Originality and Value**

The primary contribution to knowledge of this research lies in the consideration, empirical application, consolidation and relevance of the four central concepts of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction as applied to call centre work and the call centre workplace, and to the attitudes and behaviour of CSRs.

# Table of Contents

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
1.1 Background.....	14
1.2 Theoretical Foundations, Research Questions and Contribution to Knowledge.....	15
1.2.1 The Research Questions.....	17
1.2.2 Contribution to Knowledge.....	18
1.3 Chapter Outline.....	19
1.3.1 Chapter 2: Control and Alienation.....	19
1.3.2 Chapter 3: Commitment and Satisfaction.....	19
1.3.3 Chapter 4: Methodology.....	20
1.3.4 Chapter 5: Methods.....	21
1.3.5 Chapter 6: Results.....	22
1.3.6 Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion.....	22
<b>CHAPTER 2: CONTROL AND ALIENATION.....</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	23
2.2 Call Centre Research Foci.....	24
2.2.1 Key Approaches in Call Centre Research.....	25
2.3 The Sweatshop School: The Labour Process and Control.....	29
2.4 Labour Process Research As Applied To Call Centres.....	32
2.5 Control and Call centres.....	36
2.5.1 Control in Context.....	37
2.5.2 Dimensions of Control.....	38
2.5.3 Control in Call Centres: Child's Criteria.....	41
2.5.4 Control in Call Centres: Edwards' Framework and Subsequent Developments.....	43
2.5.5 Towards a Call Centre Control Model.....	45
2.5.6 The Hypotheses Concerning Management and Technological Control.....	48



<b>2.6 Alienation.....</b>	<b>48</b>
2.6.1 Agency and Structure.....	49
2.5.2 The Example of Humour.....	52
<b>2.7 Alienation, ‘bad faith’ and emotional dissonance.....</b>	<b>54</b>
2.7.1 Alienation and Call Centre Work.....	55
2.7.2 Bad Faith and the Emotion Gap.....	59
<b>2.8 Summary.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3: COMMITMENT AND SATISFACTION.....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>3.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>3.2 Commitment and the Call Centre Workplace.....</b>	<b>64</b>
3.2.1 Employee Commitment Examined.....	66
3.2.2 Two Approaches to Employee Commitment.....	70
3.2.3 A Sociological Approach.....	72
3.2.4 A ‘Managerial’ Approach and Commitment Models.....	73
3.2.5 Antecedents and Consequences (Outcomes) of Employee Commitment.....	77
3.2.6 Established Research Findings.....	80
3.2.7 High Commitment/Involvement Management in Call Centres: Fact or Fallacy?.....	82
<b>3.3 Satisfaction: Issues and Dilemmas.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>3.4 Approaches to the Satisfaction Concept.....</b>	<b>91</b>
3.4.1 A Labour Economics Approach.....	91
3.4.2 A Social Psychological Approach.....	92
3.4.3 A Sociological Approach.....	93
<b>3.5 Definitional Issues and Assumptions in Relation to Satisfaction.....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>3.6 Assumptions Concerning Satisfaction within a Call Centre Context.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>3.7 Satisfaction and Call Centre Work.....</b>	<b>97</b>
3.7.1 Control and Satisfaction.....	98
3.7.2 Intrinsic and Extrinsic.....	98
3.7.3 Skills and Training.....	99

3.8 Overview of Conceptual Linkages.....	102
3.8.2 Satisfaction, Performance and Pay.....	104
3.8.3 Satisfaction and Commitment.....	106
3.9 The Research Hypotheses.....	108
3.10 Summary.....	109
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>110</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	110
4.2 Methodological Approaches: Dilemmas and Conundrums.....	111
4.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods.....	112
4.4 Combining Research Methods.....	114
4.5 The Relevance of Positivism to This Study.....	118
4.5.1 Positivism in Context.....	119
4.5.2 A Critique Of Positivism.....	121
4.5.3 The Contribution of Popper.....	121
4.5.4 Implications of Popper’s Argument for methodology.....	123
4.5.5 The Kuhnian Paradigm: An Alternative to Popper.....	124
4.6 The Significance Of The Contributions Of Popper and Kuhn For This Thesis: Some Reservations and Justifications.....	128
4.7 The Use Of Hermeneutic Methodology In This Study.....	132
4.7.1 Hermeneutics: The Basis of Interpretive Method.....	132
4.7.2 Linguistic Constructivism and Intersubjectivity.....	134
4.8 Hermeneutic Aspects and Methodologies Employed by the Study.....	135
4.9 Critique, Marxism And Critical Theory.....	138
4.9.1 Positivism and Hermeneutics.....	139
4.9.2 The Nature Of Marxist Methodology In Relation To The Study.....	140
4.9.3 Refinements Of Marxist Methodology.....	142
4.10 Critical realism as methodology.....	146

4.10.1 Summary Implications of Critical Realist Methodology for the Research of this Thesis.....	149
4.11 Summary.....	151
<b>CHAPTER 5: METHODS.....</b>	<b>152</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	152
5.2 Overview of Research Design Stages.....	153
5.3 The Heuristic Research: Phase 1: Phase 1.....	155
5.3.1 Research Objectives.....	156
5.3.2 Instrument Development, Operationalisation of Constructs, Implementation and Nature of the Sample.....	156
5.3.3 Data Capture and Management, Analysis Procedures, Reliability and Validity.....	157
5.4 The Exploratory Research: Phase 2.....	157
5.4.1 Research Objectives.....	159
5.4.2 Instrument Development, Operationalisation of Constructs, Implementation and Nature of the Sample.....	160
5.4.3 Data Capture and Management, Analysis Procedures, Reliability and Validity.....	163
5.5 The Primary Research Contexts and Analysis Procedures.....	165
5.5.1 The Research Questions.....	166
5.5.2 Instrument Development and Operationalisation of Constructs.....	168
5.5.3 Implementation and Nature of the Sample, Data Capture and Data Preparation....	179
5.5.4 Data Analysis.....	183
5.5.5 Validity.....	187
5.6 Summary.....	188
<b>CHAPTER 6: RESULTS.....</b>	<b>189</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	189
6.2 Respondent profile.....	189
6.2.1 Respondent Age, Gender and Length of Service.....	190



6.2.2 Respondents' Contracts, Absence, Turnover and Staff Association / Union	
Membership.....	191
6.2.3 Respondents' Employment Function.....	192
6.3 Descriptive statistics.....	192
6.3.1 Human Resource Management Practices: Consultation, Communication, Involvement and Training.....	193
6.3.2 Human Resource Management Practices.....	196
6.3.3 Intention to Quit .....	200
6.3.4 Alienation: Work Characteristics and Pressure.....	201
6.3.5 Alienation: Organisational Characteristics and Customer Identification.....	203
6.3.6 Commitment: Work and Organisation.....	205
6.3.7 Commitment to Local Management, Team Management and Customer.....	208
6.3.8 Loyalty to Work and Organisation.....	212
6.3.9 Customer Interaction .....	215
6.3.10 Satisfaction with Leader and Local Management.....	216
6.3.11 Employee Control over Work Operations.....	218
6.3.12 Management and Technological Control.....	219
6.3.13 Satisfaction and Work.....	221
6.3.14 Satisfaction and Job pressure.....	223
6.3.15 Satisfaction and HRM Practices.....	224
6.3.16 Satisfaction: Personal, Physical and Team Characteristics.....	227
6.3.17 Satisfaction: Team Manager and Customer Characteristics.....	228
6.3.18 Intrinsic Factors.....	229
6.3.19 Team Relations.....	231
6.3.20 Involvement and Consultation.....	233
6.3.30 Extrinsic Factors.....	235
6.4 The Hypotheses.....	237
6.4.1 Hypothesis 1: That Customer Interaction, Loyalty to Employer, Satisfaction With Leader and HR Practices are Positively Associated with Commitment.....	237
6.4.2 Hypothesis 2: That Satisfaction is Positively Associated with Commitment.....	239

6. 4.3 Hypothesis 3: That Intention to Quit is Negatively Associated with Commitment.....	239
6. 4.4 Hypothesis 4a: That Alienation and Work Satisfaction are Negatively Associated with Each Other .....	240
6.4.5: Hypothesis 4b: That Work Satisfaction and Alienation are Negatively Associated With Each Other.....	241
6.4.6: Hypothesis 5: That Management and Technological Control is Positively Associated with Alienation.....	241
6.4.7: Hypothesis 6: That Loyalty to Organisation is Negatively Associated with Alienation.....	242
6.4.8: Hypothesis 7: That Management and Technological Control is Negatively Associated with Work Satisfaction.....	243
6.4.9: Hypothesis 8: That leader satisfaction, team relations, intrinsics, extrinsics, involvement, customer interaction and employee control over work are positively associated with work satisfaction.....	243
6.4.10: Hypothesis 9: That Alienation is Negatively Associated with Commitment.....	245
6.4.11 Hypothesis 10: That Human Resource Practices is Positively Associated with Commitment.....	246
6.5 Summary.....	246
6.5.1 Respondent Profile: Age, Gender and Length of Service.....	247
6.5.2 Respondent Profile: Contracts, Absence, Turnover and Staff Association/Union Membership.....	247
6.6 Summary of Responses to the Multiple Constructs.....	247
6.7 Results of the Hypotheses.....	248
<b>CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>250</b>
7.1 Introduction.....	250
7.2 Control: Context and Discussion.....	251



7.2.1 Overview.....	251
7.3 Control: Discussion of Results.....	253
7.4 CSR Control over Work Operations.....	258
7.5 Alienation: Context and Discussion.....	261
7.6 Meaninglessness and Accommodatory Response.....	263
7.7 Self-Estrangement, Emotional Dissonance, Humour and Bad Faith.....	264
7.8 Alienation: Discussion of Results.....	265
7.9 Commitment: Context.....	270
7.10 Commitment: Discussion of Results.....	271
7.11 Satisfaction: Context.....	277
7.12 Satisfaction: Discussion of Results.....	277
7.12.1 Satisfaction: Work and Job Pressure.....	277
7.12.2 Satisfaction: Human Resource Management Practices (HRMPs).....	279
7.12.3 Satisfaction: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors.....	282
7.13 Brief Discussion of Hypothesis Outcomes.....	283
7.13.1 Hypothesis Cluster 1.....	285
7.13.2 Hypothesis Cluster 2.....	287
7.13.3 Hypothesis Cluster 3.....	288
7.14 Contribution to Knowledge.....	290
7.15 Research Limitations.....	292
7.15.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Limitations.....	292
7.15.2 Limitations of Method and Design.....	293
7.16 Recommendations for Future Research.....	294
7.16.1 Construct Linkages and Implications for Practice.....	295
7.16.2 Establish Causal Links.....	296
7.16.3 Comparative Analysis of Call Centre Workplaces.....	296
7.17 Some Reflective Observations Concerning this Thesis.....	296
7.17 Summary.....	297

## **List of Figures**

<b>Figure 2.1: A Call Centre Control Model.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Figure 3.1 Types of Skill Matching and Satisfaction Levels.....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Figure 7.1: A Call Centre Control Typology (reproduced from Chapter 2).....</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Figure 7.2: A Commitment Framework.....</b>	<b>276</b>

## **List of Tables**

<b>Table 5.1 Stages of the Research.....</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Table 5.2 Research Criteria.....</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Table 5.3 Population Size and Response Rates.....</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Table 5.4 The Categorical Variables Extracted From The Questionnaire.....</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>Table 5.5 Managerial and Technical Control.....</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Table 5.6 Customer Relations and Estrangement.....</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Table 5.7 Satisfaction With Job.....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Table 5.8 Job and Contextual Influences.....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Table 5.9 Influence over Job.....</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Table 5.10 Job and Work – Related Aspects.....</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Table 5.11 Organisational Commitment Items.....</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>Table 5.12 Commitment to Management.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Table 5.13 The Interview Questions.....</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Table 5.14 Overview of Questionnaire Sections.....</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>Table 5.15 Measures of dispersion.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Table 5.16 Hypothesis 3 Regression Analysis: Impact of Intention to Quit on Commitment.....</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>Table 5.17 Hypothesis 1 Regression Analysis: Impact of Human Resource Practices, Customer/CSR Interaction, Loyalty, Satisfaction with Team Leader on Commitment.....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>Table 6.1 Respondents’ Personal Profile: Age, Gender and Length of Service.....</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>Table 6.2 Respondents’ Employment Profile: Contracts, Absence, Turnover and Staff Association / Union Membership.....</b>	<b>191</b>



<b>Table 6.3 Respondents' Employment Function.....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>Table 6.4 HRM Practices: Consultation.....</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Table 6.5 HRM Practices: Communication.....</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Table 6.6 HRM Practices: Involvement.....</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>Table 6.7 HRM Practices: Skills.....</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>Table 6.8 Attitudes Toward HRM Practices: Relations with Local Management.....</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Table 6.9 Attitudes Towards HRM Practices: Intra Team Relations.....</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>Table 6.10 Attitudes Towards HRM Practices: The Team Manager/Leader.....</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>Table 6.11 Attitudes Towards HRM Practices: Customer Orientation.....</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Table 6.12 Human Resource Practices: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Table 6.13 Attitudes towards Leaving the Organisation.....</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Table 6.14 Intention to Quit: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Table 6.15 Subjective Aspects of Alienation at Work: Work Characteristics.....</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>Table 6.16 Subjective Aspects of Alienation at Work: Work Pressure.....</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>Table 6.17 Subjective Aspects of Alienation at Work: Organisational Characteristics.....</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Table 6.18 Subjective Aspects of Alienation at Work: Customer Identification.....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Table 6.19 Alienation: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Table 6.20 Attitudes towards Commitment: Work - Related Factors.....</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>Table 6.21 Attitudes towards Commitment: Organisational.....</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>Table 6.22 Attitudes towards Commitment: Senior Management and Call Centre Issues....</b>	<b>208</b>
<b>Table 6.23 Attitudes Towards Commitment: Relations With Local Management.....</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>Table 6.24 Attitudes Towards Commitment: The Team Manager/Leader.....</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>Table 6.25 Attitudes Towards Commitment: Customer Orientation.....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>Table 6.26 Commitment: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>Table 6.27 Loyalty: Work and Organisational Factors.....</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>Table 6.28 Loyalty: Call Centre Management, Team and Customer Relations.....</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Table 6.29 Loyalty: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Table 6.30 Quality of Customer Interaction: Attitudes towards Customers.....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>Table 6.31 Quality of Customer Interaction: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>216</b>

<b>Table 6.32 Attitudes towards Team Leader and Local Management.....</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Table 6.33 Satisfaction with Leader: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>Table 6.34 Attitudes towards Control over Work Operations.....</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>Table 6.35 Control over Work Operations: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>Table 6.36 Attitudes towards Management and Technological Control.....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Table 6.37 Management and Technological Control: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>Table 6.38 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Work-Related Characteristics.....</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>Table 6.39 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Job-Related Pressure.....</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>Table 6.40 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Consultation.....</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Table 6.41 Satisfaction: HR Practices and Communication.....</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Table 6.42 Satisfaction: Skills and Training.....</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>Table 6.43 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Personal, Physical and Team Characteristics....</b>	<b>227</b>
<b>Table 6.44 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Team Management and Customers.....</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>Table 6.45 Overall Satisfaction: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>Table 6.46 Attitudes towards Intrinsic Work Factors.....</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Table 6.47 Attitudes towards Intrinsic Factors: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>Table 6.48 Team Relations: Attitudes towards the Team.....</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>Table 6.49 Attitudes towards Team Relations: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>Table 6.50 Attitudes towards Involvement and Consultation.....</b>	<b>233</b>
<b>Table 6.51 Attitudes towards Involvement and Consultation: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>Table 6.52 Attitudes towards Extrinsic Factors.....</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>Table 6.51 Attitudes towards Extrinsic Factors: Compound Scores.....</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Table 6.52 Regression Analysis: Impact of Human Resource Practices, Customer/CSR Interaction, Loyalty, Satisfaction with Team Leader on Commitment.....</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Table 6.53 Regression Analysis: Impact of Work Satisfaction on Commitment.....</b>	<b>239</b>



**Table 6.54 Regression Analysis: Impact of Intention to Quit on Commitment.....240**

**Table 6.55 Regression Analysis: Relationship between Alienation and Satisfaction.....240**

**Table 6.56 Regression Analysis: Relationship between Satisfaction and Alienation.....241**

**Table 6.57 Regression Analysis: Impact of Management and Technological Control on Alienation.....242**

**Table 6.58 Regression Analysis: Impact of Loyalty to Organisation on Alienation.....242**

**Table 6.59 Regression Analysis: Impact of Management and Technological Control on Satisfaction.....243**

**Table 6.60 Regression Analysis: Impact of Leader Satisfaction, Team Relations, Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Involvement, Customer Interaction and Employee Control over Work on Satisfaction.....244**

**Table 6.61 Regression Analysis: Impact of Alienation on Commitment.....245**

**Table 6.62 Regression Analysis: Impact of Human Resource Practices on Commitment....246**

**Table 6.63 Aggregate Responses to Multiple Constructs.....248**

**Table 6.64 Results of the Hypotheses.....248**

**Table 7.1 Results Categories for Satisfaction..... 278**

**Table 7.2 Hypotheses Clustered by Main Construct as Dependent Variable..... 284**

## **List of Appendices**

**Appendix 1: References**

**Appendix 2: Phase 1 Pilot Questionnaire**

**Appendix 3: Phase 1 Pilot Interview Schedule**

**Appendix 4: Phase 2 Pilot Questionnaire**

**Appendix 5: Phase 2 Pilot Interview Schedule**

**Appendix 6: Phase 3 Questionnaire**

**Appendix 7: Phase 3 Interview Schedule**

**Appendix 8: Papers published**

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Over the past decade call centres have become established as the chief disseminators of telephonic information services delivered to the public as customers. In many ways, call centres may be regarded as a significant manifestation of the changes within most developed societies. These changes include macro elements such as the transformation from industrial to post-industrial and post-Fordist service economies together with the accompanying trend towards service and front-line work, often at the expense of declining and increasingly capital-intensive manufacturing activity.

On a personal note, my interest in call centres was aroused in a number of ways. Firstly, the tradition within what used to be called 'industrial sociology' of investigating workers' attitudes in manufacturing industries dominated by mass production technology resulted in a legacy of rich material, particularly within the automotive industry with researchers utilising concepts such as alienation and control and subsequently labour process theory. The emergent call centre workplace provided an opportunity to examine these concepts within the relatively new 'white collar' context characterised by work routinisation and high levels of management control. Secondly, my interest was further stimulated by the fact that front-line service work was increasingly concerned with call centre workers providing sales and service advice thereby focusing upon the relationship between customer service/sales representatives (CSRs) and customers themselves. Clearly the focus of CSR work is upon the customer



relationship and the requirement for that relationship to be managed effectively. Human resource management practices (HRMPs) within the call centre workplace are partly concerned with monitoring the quality of CSR output by means of close technological surveillance and through periodic performance assessment while simultaneously combining these 'punitive' functions with more 'facilitatory' practices such as the provision of adequate training and of opportunities for involving CSRs in their work and workplace activities.

Thirdly, partly due to my sociological and industrial relations background, I was interested in the demographics of call centre employment described by annual call centre surveys such as those of IDS as a reflection of broader trends within the UK labour market. These trends are well documented in publications such as the Economic and Labour Market Review (formerly Labour Market Trends) and include reduction in full-time employment, greater use of non-standard contracts of employment, flexibilisation of labour and decline in trade union membership. Within such a context, questions concerning the extent of CSR commitment and satisfaction become of central interest. A further area of interest is prescriptive and concerns the extent to which the employment relationship within call centres is managed effectively.

My initial research of two pilot surveys spanning phases 1 and 2, described in Chapter 5, commenced when call centre research was still in its infancy and extant literature did not deal adequately with concepts such as commitment and satisfaction of CSRs. The pilot surveys were used to refine the research questions and research design for this thesis.

## **1.2 Theoretical Foundations, Research Questions and Contribution to Knowledge**

Phases 1 and 2, comprising the pilot studies, identified the central concepts of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction as being significant constructs which underpin CSR perceptions of their work, workplace, team members, customers, local management and the

wider organisation. With regard to *control* two main approaches are adopted. The first considers labour process theory which is concerned with the imperatives of managerial control and its effects upon workers themselves and the process whereby work becomes deskilled and degraded (Braverman, 1974). Early call centre research focused upon this aspect of control (Taylor, Baldry, Bain and Ellis, 2003; Bain; Watson, Mulvey, Taylor, and Gall, 2002; Rose, 2002; Callaghan and Thompson, 2002; Taylor and Bain, 1999). A second but related approach considers control as formalisation. Also known as bureaucratic control this variant, according to Edwards (1979), is rooted in the social and hierarchical structure of the organisation rather than in the personal authority of the manager and the labour process. The work of Frenkel *et al* (1999) adopts this approach for analysing the bureaucratic and regimented workflows of front-line service work.

The association between call centre work and the concept of *alienation* is one that remains largely unrecognised in the call centre literature. The alienation concept itself has attracted a considerable body of literature and research and has traditionally been linked with Fordist mass production systems. However, the concept remains relevant, particularly in work contexts subject to high levels of control and supervision since one of the manifestations of alienation as a 'feeling state' is one of perceived over-control. Also of significance is the link between alienation and emotion work which is explored in Chapter 2. Finally, alienation may also be linked with job satisfaction (or the lack of it) as work may be regarded as meaningless, and with commitment and involvement taking the form of 'alienative involvement', discussed in Chapter 2. *Commitment*, the third major concept dealt with in this research has links with control, alienation and satisfaction as it may be posited that negative commitment is associated with high levels of control and alienation and with low levels of satisfaction. As with alienation, commitment is relatively under-researched within call centres. Nevertheless the extant research considers organisational commitment both as



antecedent and consequence of other work-related variables. These include variables such as role traits and elements of the work environment such as job characteristics and organisational structure and control.

Finally, *satisfaction* is considered in relation to CSR attitudes concerning a wide range of job and work-related characteristics. In relation to the issues affecting satisfaction and for the purpose of this research, certain 'a priori' assumptions are made concerning call centre worker/ CSR satisfaction. Firstly, it is assumed that a certain degree of 'instrumentality' resides within CSRs' views of work in that work is regarded as a means to an end, and for this reason is not a central life interest within the call centre context ((Hyman, et al, 2003). Secondly, it is held that an instrumental orientation towards work is now typical of those in many relatively lowly remunerated occupations such as call centre work (IDS 2004) and is probably more of a reflection of supply for and demand of labour within the local labour market (Gallie, White, Cheng and Tomlinson, 1998) than of factors related to, for example, social class. The third and final assumption, it that while call centre workers may prioritise pay, this may depend upon their 'definition of the situation' at any given time.

### **1.2.1 The Research Questions**

The stated aims of the research which incorporate these conceptual issues and framed as research questions are:

1. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the concepts and constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?

2. What is the nature of the association between the concepts and constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?

It is important to note that with regard to research question 2, no assumptions of causality are made.

### **1.2.2 Contribution to Knowledge**

The primary contribution to knowledge of this research lies in the consideration, empirical application, consolidation and relevance of the four central concepts of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction as applied to call centre work and the call centre workplace, and to the attitudes and behaviour of CSRs. The concept of control clearly has practical implications for the exercise of control strategies and practices as addressed in Chapter 2. Control may be regarded as the underpinning and mediating construct which frames CSR attitudes and behaviour towards their work, the customer relationship, local and global management and the technological architecture on which all CSR work operations are based. As such, the approach taken by this research straddles the three traditional perspectives to call centre research referred to above. The research therefore assumes that the call centre retains its novelty as a customer-oriented workplace with both generic and specific technological and management control systems while at the same time giving credence to the behavioural and attitudinal consequences of such systems upon the CSR. In this context, the research for this thesis considers alienation, commitment and satisfaction as valid analytical concepts and constructs which facilitate greater semantic understanding of the complexities of the call centre work milieu.



## **1.3 Chapter Outline**

### **1.3.1 Chapter 2: Control and Alienation**

This chapter addresses the theoretical and conceptual approaches germane to control and alienation and argues that many studies of call centre work focus almost exclusively upon control over the labour process and the associated 'sweatshop' approach, thereby overlooking the relevance of other, more plausible approaches. Hence, certain aspects of control, the role of structure and agency and the concept of alienation are all-important, but largely ignored, factors for consideration within the call centre workplace. In this chapter, the concepts of control and alienation in relation to call centre work are reviewed. It is argued, through the literature, that call centre workers are subject to high levels of management and technological control and have little discretion concerning the enactment of their work roles. Furthermore, it has been argued that in many respects, call centre work is at least moderately alienating, giving rise to the hypothetical proposition of an association between high levels of management and technological control and high levels of alienation.

### **1.3.2 Chapter 3: Commitment and Satisfaction**

The chapter addresses the concepts of employee commitment and work satisfaction, which, in relation to call centre work, have been relatively under-researched. It is argued that both concepts are pertinent within call centre organisations and workplaces and that work satisfaction is both antecedent and predictor of commitment. The commitment and satisfaction constructs are also associated with control and alienation and the hypotheses generated reflect this relationship. Additional constructs considered in this chapter are subsidiary to the four main concepts and include human resource practices, loyalty to

employer, satisfaction with leader, intention to quit, team relations, intrinsic and extrinsic work factors and customer interaction. While the commitment and satisfaction concepts have attracted a great deal of literature, only those aspects deemed relevant to the call centre context are examined. A selection of the extant literature dealing with the concepts of commitment and satisfaction has been explored. Much of the literature is not directly concerned with the call centre workplace. Those studies which utilise both concepts in relation to call centre work remain relatively limited in number and scope. Commitment and satisfaction, together with control and alienation, are presented as key concepts and constructs which are pertinent to call centre work, the relationship between the CSR, her organisation, workplace, work tasks and teams, local and senior management and the customer interface. The application of these concepts has not been previously attempted within a call centre context and this research endeavours to fill certain gaps in knowledge applied to the call centre workplace. The hypotheses generated in Chapters 2 and 3 posit the nature of the association between the four main constructs and the various sub constructs identified within these chapters.

### **1.3.3 Chapter 4: Methodology**

This chapter concerns itself with the dilemmas and conundrums of the methodological approaches adopted for the research together with an explanation and examination of the methods utilised to inform this approach. The relevant methodologies are then addressed and evaluated and an argument for methodological pluralism is advanced. The chapter provides the rationale for the methodological orientation used in this research. The focus of the investigation is the call centre work environment and the postulated association between the four main conceptual constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction. The



methodological choice appropriate to this investigation is one in which mixed methods which combine inductive and deductive approaches is used. The research for this thesis therefore adopts both positivist and interpretive methods, including elements of critical realism, in recognition of the unresolved theoretical debate that appears to place both positivism and interpretivism into two diametrically opposed camps. This 'multi-methodological' orientation, it is argued, is highly appropriate to the admixture of call centre workplaces as research contexts, to the social processes that occur within them, to the meanings that employees give to their work and to structures of work and organisation, and to the research questions themselves. In this chapter, the underlying philosophical assumptions pertaining to positivist, interpretive, Marxist and critical realist methodologies are evaluated in relation to this research.

#### **1.3.4 Chapter 5: Methods**

The aim of this chapter is to specify the detail of the chosen research design and the main methods employed from inception to completion of the empirical research. This chapter builds upon the philosophical foundations of Chapter 3 and describes the research design and procedures used during the various phases of the research. Research design issues of sampling, instrument development, validity and reliability of constructs and scales and ethical considerations are explained and justified. The chapter describes the research methods used for the three phases of the research as identified in Table 5.2. The chapter concentrates on the primary research for this thesis. The procedures utilised and described in the chapter help to defend the rigour and robustness of the research design, data collection and of the data analysis itself.

### **1.3.5 Chapter 6: Results**

The results presented in this chapter reveal a general profile of customer service and sales representatives (CSRs). The data elicited from the questionnaire responses concerning the multiple constructs of respondents are summarised. A summary of the hypothesis outcomes is also provided. The chapter presents the results and analyses of the main fieldwork data. These results are concerned with issues relating to the population and samples, the survey instruments, variables and constructs. The chapter commences with a description of the respondent profile. This is followed by an account of the descriptive statistics relating to the constructs and questionnaire items, both of which were explained in Chapter 5. Finally, the results of the statistical analyses concerning each of the ten hypotheses are presented. A discussion and analysis of the findings as applied to the four main constructs and to the hypotheses, with regard to extant literature and their implications, are given in Chapter 7.

### **1.3.6 Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion**

In this chapter, the research results are evaluated in the light of extant literature. The first research question identifies the four main concepts relevant to this thesis and these are considered individually in relation to the results. A brief discussion of the specific hypotheses which stem from the second research question is then presented. The extent to which the research makes a contribution to knowledge is also considered in this chapter. This is followed by a brief consideration of the contribution the research makes to the call centre literature and an indication of the extent to which the investigation may lead to further research in this area.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Control and Alienation**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The location of the call centre workplace within societal and organisational contexts characterised by post-industrial and post-Fordist service economies, high levels of technological and managerial surveillance, a variety of non-standard employment contracts and almost constant customer contact, raises a number of conceptual issues in relation to call centres and call centre work. The stated aims of the research which incorporate these conceptual issues and framed as research questions are:

1. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the concepts and constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?
2. What is the nature of the association between the concepts and constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?

This chapter addresses the theoretical and conceptual approaches germane to control and alienation and argues that many studies of call centre work focus almost exclusively upon control over the labour process and the associated 'sweatshop' approach, thereby overlooking the relevance of other, more plausible approaches.

Hence, certain aspects of control, the role of structure and agency and the concept of alienation are all-important, but largely ignored, factors for consideration within the call centre workplace. Within the context of a critique of the 'sweatshop' approach, the chapter also argues for a broader approach towards analysing call centre work and those who work in them which incorporates certain aspects of control and alienation reviewed in this chapter, and commitment and work satisfaction which are considered in Chapter 3. The derivation of the relevant hypothetical propositions subject to empirical analysis within this thesis are indicated in this chapter and are also presented in more detail at the end of Chapter 3. However where certain hypotheses contain propositions which associate constructs explored in both Chapters 2 and 3, these are specified in this chapter and fully developed at the end of Chapter 3.

## **2.2 Call Centre Research Foci**

Consequent upon call centres becoming established within the UK, much call centre research has examined the more obvious manifestations of call centre work and has therefore focused upon the allegedly stressful, intense and repetitive nature of such work (Fernie and Metcalf, 1998; Taylor and Bain, 1999; Holtgrewe and Kerst, 2001; Shire, Holtgrewe and Kerst (2002); Bain and Taylor, 2000; Bain *et al*, 2002). Other research concerns the extent to which control and individual performance measurement as facilitated by extensive electronic surveillance impacts upon call centre workers (who are also described as 'handlers', 'agents', 'customer service / sales representatives' (CSRs) and 'front line workers'). Also regarded as problematic is the contention that there are few opportunities for promotion within the flat-structured, productivity driven call centre workplace (Holman and Fernie, 2000, Rose

E., 2002). Arguably dysfunctional consequences of call centre work include higher than average rates of labour turnover and absenteeism (IDS, 2002, 2003).

As indicated in Chapter 1, call centre workplaces tend to epitomise the trend towards service and 'front-line' work within an increasingly information oriented economy (Frenkel *et al*, 1999). There are two interlinked aspects concerning the work of the CSR; the first is the relationship between the CSR and the customer, and the second concerns the association between the call centre organisation and its management (whether in-house or outsourced) and the CSR ((Korczynski, 2002). The customer relationship is a complex interaction between service provider and service recipient (Rieder, Matuschek and Anderson, 2002), and can be a considerable source of stress for CSRs (Deery, Iverson and Walsh, 2002; Korczynsky, 2002), who represent 'the personality of the firm to the customer over the telephone' (Belt, Richardson and Webster, 1999, p. 18). The relationship between the customer service/sales representative (CSR) and her workplace and wider organisation is often characterised by tight managerial control by means of monitoring, measurement and assessment systems (Deery and Kinnie, 2004). However the CSR may internalise and utilise the more oppressive aspects of their employment relationship in order to influence the actions of both managers and customers (Rosenthal, 2004).

### **2.2.1 Key Approaches in Call Centre Research**

Much call centre research, which dates from the mid 1990s, emphasises the negative aspects of work, employment and organisational characteristics within call centres.

This is partly due to the nature of some critical theoretical perspectives such as labour process theory which seek to explain the nature of call centre work in relation to a



critique of capitalist society, and partly due to the limited theoretical scope of such research. The earlier research focuses upon the juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary issues within the context of the move from an industrial to a service and information/knowledge based economy and society using, for example, labour process theory in its various incarnations to point to a rejuvenation of Taylorist systems and methods of organisation and control. Hence, the association of new computer and telecommunications technology, a development characteristic of an information and service economy of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, with close monitoring and control typical of late nineteenth and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Taylorism. Call centres and the control and surveillance mechanisms used therein are often luridly labelled, by means of metaphor or metonym, by the use of terms such as ‘the new sweatshops’ and ‘twentieth century panopticons’ (Ferne and Metcalf, 1998), ‘electronic sweatshops’ (Garson, 1988) and ‘assembly lines in the head’ (Taylor and Bain (1999). The conclusions of much of the early research are generally pessimistic and reveal that call centre work is highly routinised, and, indeed, subject to close monitoring and high levels of control. Computer technology such as automatic call distribution (ACD) facilitates close monitoring by directing calls to CSRs automatically and measuring and recording call volume, call duration and waiting time. The telephone monitoring process is augmented by the mechanism of ‘transaction monitoring’ (TM), whereby call centre managers determine how well the call centre is delivering a particular service. In essence, such technology is geared towards minimising waiting time, measuring the speed of work, the level of downtime and assessing remotely the quality of the CSR – customer interaction. In the physical absence of managers, CSRs nevertheless are unambiguously aware that every aspect of their work is constantly measured (Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996).

To summarise this labour process theory driven ‘sweatshop’ approach, it is possible to posit that employees are viewed as replaceable resources and that constant surveillance and programmed learning together with strict discipline reinforce high performance standards. In addition, CSR – customer interaction entails a degree of emotional labour (see below), which, together with low financial rewards may influence adversely levels of satisfaction with and commitment towards work and the call centre workplace and organisation.

More recent research has identified an alternative approach (which may be labelled ‘enabling’) in relation to call centre employment. The ‘enabling’ approach attempts to demonstrate that call centre work is a mosaic of relatively complex interactive customer service activity, and is more multifaceted, differentiated and skilled than the monolithic notion of such work provided by researchers of what may be called the ‘sweatshop school’. In support of this view, Shire, Holtgrewe and Kerst (2003) contend:

*“As organisational strategies, call centres are surely attempts to rationalise service work, but at the same time compete on the basis of improved service quality. Subject to the dual logics of rationalisation and customer orientation, the development of call centres and the experience of call centre work are subject to a range of tensions, contradictions and dilemmas”. (p. 10)*

Frenkel *et al* (1999) also postulate that call centre work can be diverse, relatively skilled and challenging and that skills and knowledge-enhancing competencies can be facilitated and enhanced by appropriate human resource (HR) strategies, systems and practices. Frenkel *et al* (*op cit*) also assert that:



*“Workers identify with management goals and undertake initiatives consistent with these objectives. Relationships with co-workers are mutually beneficial, particularly with regard to learning, and customer relations contribute to workers’ job satisfaction. In sum, work is experience as enabling, competency enhancing and socially satisfying”. (p. 267)*

According to this perspective, the Taylorised engineering model endorsed as critique by the ‘sweatshop school’ (including some labour process theory researchers) is therefore seen as having little relevance. Deery and Kinnie (2004), for example, argue that service work often requires judgement and discretion on the part of the CSR and necessitates more sophisticated and flexible control regimes and the provision of information as well as instruction. Furthermore, as the customer – CSR relationship is far more sophisticated than the ‘sweatshop school’ suggests, routinised reactions to customer queries based on closely followed scripts being both detrimental to customer relations and CSR well-being at work. Hence the attitudes of both CSR and customer are crucial within the call centre employment relationship and ‘where customers’ requirements cannot easily be standardised, workers (CSRs) will require some degree of flexibility and discretion in negotiating their interaction with customers’. (p. 4)

The two views of call centre work, the ‘sweatshop school’ and the ‘enabling school’ respectively, are themselves based upon two distinct theoretical approaches, one which is antithetical to and critical of how the call centre employment relationship is managed while the other is concerned with an hybridised human resource management approach which highlights, often rhetorically, the inclusive nature of an employee’s involvement within the workplace in order to maximise organisational and workplace efficiency by inculcating in the employee a sense of well-being, discretion and autonomy. The former approach, which is based upon, but not

exclusively so, labour process theory, utilises concepts such as control over and de-skilling of work, and alienation from work (amongst manual workers) as a result of the routinisation and mechanisation of jobs. The latter approach, which attempts to legitimise the role of management within the workplace, employs concepts such as commitment to work and organisation, satisfaction with work together with involvement and possibly participation in decision-making. These perspectives stem from largely mutually exclusive ideological standpoints, the one highly critical of capitalist modes of production and the other legitimising power and authority relations within capitalist organisations and are now considered in more detail.

### **2.3 The Sweatshop School: The Labour Process and Control**

Labour process theory has its origins in the work of Marx (1970, 1975). Essentially, Marx provides us with a critique of the political economics of capitalism, a system which creates two broad social classes – the capitalists or bourgeoisie, who own and control the means of production, and the working class, or proletariat, who sell their labour power to capitalists in order to survive. Both classes, Marx argues, need each other and are mutually dependent on one another, but their interests conflict.

Capitalism aims to make profits in order to accumulate capital and so make more profits, whereas workers' interests are concerned with increasing wages and improving working conditions. The manager in a capitalist organisation cannot, therefore, depend upon the voluntary and willing co-operation, loyalty and commitment of the workforce and has to seek compliance through the exercise of control. Labour process theory concerns itself, in critical vein, with the imperatives of managerial control and its effects upon workers themselves and the process whereby work becomes deskilled and degraded.



The influential work of Braverman (1974) follows the tradition of Marxist critique. His central argument is that the pursuit of capitalist has led to a general trend towards deskilling, routinising and mechanising of jobs across the employment spectrum, from manufacturing to retailing and from design to clerical work. Braverman critically evaluates the work of Taylor (1911) whose ideas concerning 'scientific management', developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became widely disseminated and used by engineers and work study practitioners in Britain, Japan and interestingly in the Soviet Union under Lenin, but had only a limited influence upon the USA (Grint, 1991). For Taylor, the problem of work is the problem of managerial control and the issue for management is to ensure the maximum degree of effort for the minimum amount of reward. The solution, according to Taylor was to extend the division of labour, separate the conception (thinking) of work from its execution (doing) thereby making the workforce less skilled. This would result not only in higher levels of productivity per worker and cheaper labour, but also a more compliant workforce. Taylor espoused a number of techniques which collectively became known as 'scientific management', the most relevant for our purposes was the imperative of labour deskilling arising from the fragmentation of work into repetitive tasks which would facilitate the employment of cheaper labour and the elimination of restrictive practices previously used by employees on the basis of their monopoly over knowledge.

In criticising Taylor and scientific management Braverman makes the assumption that there is a fundamental conflict underlying the relationship between capital and labour, and that the nature of the relationship between management and workforce together with the issue of technological change need to be seen in this light. For Braverman, the employment relationship begins when the employer buys the services of an



employee in the labour market. In entering into a contract of employment, the employer and employee have only agreed the terms and conditions of the employment relationship. The details of what work employees do, when they do it and how it is done have to be resolved day-by-day in the workplace. Braverman argues that, in order to get maximum return on their 'investment in human labour, employers have to maximise their control over the behaviour of employees, whatever the type of technology in use. Moreover, management control systems, according to Braverman, were one aspect of the wider class conflict between capital and labour.

Braverman also argued that the need for management control to cope with uncommitted workers led to the degradation of work skills and workers themselves. He claimed that although science and technology were more demanding of education, training and exercise of mental effort, work was increasingly subdivided into routine and easy-to-learn fragments as Taylor had suggested. The need for managers to maintain a disciplined workforce led them into a continuing process in which approaches to control were perpetually refined and intensified. These extensions of management control erode craft skill, reduce workers' independence and reduce the importance of their knowledge of the craft. In addition, workers are excluded from decisions about methods and the pace of work; technology reduces worker skill and discretion, fragmenting tasks as Taylor recommended, stifles individual development, reduces wages and enhances management status.

However, it is important to note the argument that Braverman's thesis, in considering workers as an objective class subject to the unconstrained power of the capitalist class – hence invoking the 'iron law of deskilling' (Watson, 2003) – is unduly deterministic and therefore ignores or at best delimits the role of subjectivity and agency within the employment relationship. To be sure, more recent research has provided some redress

**'by identifying a variety of levels of influence on action' (Thompson and McHugh, 2002, p. 368), and the regeneration of labour process theory has helped to re-focus upon the 'micro' workplace level as the collection of papers by Thompson and Warhurst, (1998) illustrate. Nevertheless, this falls short of considering workers' or managers' subjective orientations to their work, work situation and the employment relationship. Nonetheless, the revival of empiricism concerning the labour process is best exemplified by research within the call centre milieu.**

#### **2.4 Labour Process Research As Applied To Call Centres: The Taylorisation Of The Office?**

**The call centre labour process has been well documented (Taylor, Baldry, Bain and Ellis, 2003; Bain *et al*, 2002; Rose E., 2002; Callaghan and Thompson, 2002, TUC, 2001; Taylor and Bain, 1999). However, many characteristics of call centre work not only involve the question of deskilling, but also have a common antecedent stemming from Marx's ideas concerning alienation.**

**Many subsequent contributions focusing specifically upon 'white collar' work during the course of the twentieth century (Lockwood, 1958; Blackburn and Prandy, 1965; Glen and Feldberg, 1979; Crompton and Jones, 1984) refer to the process of 'proletarianisation' of the white collar worker in relation to work, market and status situations: changing work situations, for example, concern the routinisation of tasks as a result of technological developments, which facilitate deskilling of, and tighter supervisory/managerial control over, work operations. Changing market situations for clerical labour are determined partly by the supply and demand for such labour.**

**Where the increased supply of relatively unskilled labour often exceeded the demand for such labour, the result was reflected in lower wages and deterioration in the terms**



and conditions of employment as compared with those of manual workers, which in turn resulted in a deterioration in the social status of the clerical worker.

A further related development is concerned with the feminisation of routine clerical work. In past decades, employers could more easily dispense with female workers as increasing numbers of them sought temporary work prior to marriage and family building. Indeed, the call centre worker of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century appears to have progressed further along the 'proletarianisation' route than her other white collar office counterparts as depicted by Smith, Knights and Wilmott (1991). Symptomatic of this journey, and in addition to the routinisation and feminisation of the white collar and call centre labour process, is the dramatic change in the nature of the employment contract over the past twenty years or so, as depicted by the move towards 'non-standard' contracts involving agency and temporary workers together with the introduction of temporal flexibility and 24 hour shift patterns (Millward, Bryson and Forth, 2000; Baldry, Bain and Taylor, 1998). The lowering of status and deterioration of the labour process and work situation of clerical labour also gave rise to increased unionisation of white collar workers within the finance and banking sector and more generally. An appropriate depiction of call centre work from this perspective is provided by Bibby (2001):

*...human agents submit to a highly controlled work regime. Call centres have evoked comparison with the sort of assembly line working in manufacturing associated with Henry Ford and Taylorism. Some have described call centres as an electronic assembly line of the twenty-first century. The degree of surveillance necessary has also invited unfavourable comparisons, for example with nineteenth century designs for prisons (by one call centre worker) with Roman slave ships: 'You feel like you are on a galley boat being watched, answering calls every 30*



*seconds, monitored and told off if there are mistakes'*. Channel 4 TV Special Report, broadcast 14<sup>th</sup> December 1999)

This may be contrasted with the illustration of the ideal-typical male Senior Clerk circa 1860:

*His labour process was marked by a high degree of autonomy and task discretion, his relations with the employer by high trust and social status was an ambivalent mix of salaried labourer and aspirant bourgeois. His physical work environment closely resembled his home in its furniture, its open fire, curtains and, by the end of the century, gas lighting. He had the same degree of control over his environment as in his home – he could call for the office junior to put more coal on the fire, he could open or close a door, pull the curtains, or open a window.*

(Baldry, Bain and Taylor 1998, p. 164).

The distinction between the two ideal types is exemplified within the contemporary call centre context by a report by the TUC (2001). The report describes a number of cases which are claimed to exemplify the 'sweatshop' approach taken by many employers. For example, there have been instances where:

- Employees 'were expected to make time up when they went to the toilet';
- Employees 'were expected to take two calls a minute for seven and a half hours a day';
- Line managers ruled 'by fear and intimidation';
- Employees had to buy their own headsets; and
- Employees experienced 'acoustic shock' (sound surges via telephone handsets resulting in acute pain and loss of short-term memory).

It could, therefore, be argued that call centre workers are the contemporary manifestation, if not the culmination of a process which may be called the ‘Taylorisation of work’. Hence the call centre labour process, according to this view, is characterised by low task discretion, specified performance targets, visual and electronic surveillance and low trust relations associated with Taylorised work. Those aspects of Taylorism related to the detailed measurement and control of output and performance whereby the practice of target setting is a key factor in understanding the growing evidence of both fundamental managerial dilemmas and high levels of employee or CSR dissatisfaction. At the core of these problems lies management’s desire to set targets that measure not only the quantitative aspects of employees’ tasks but also to exert more control and direction over the performance of more qualitative areas of employee-customer interaction such as the use of on-screen scripting and call taping.

The ongoing dilemma for the management of call centre work is concerned with both the *quantity* of calls measured using criteria such as the number of calls made per hour, average duration of calls and intervals between calls, and the *quality* of each CSR-customer interaction which entails a detailed analysis of call content and a judgement on how successful the CSR performs vis-à-vis the customer. (Taylor *et al*, 2003). In similar vein, Korczynski (2002) has argued that there are two essentially contradictory facets that determine the nature of the control structure and process within a call centre – the imperative of cost-efficiency (quantity) coupled with the desire to be customer orientated (quality). As Bain *et al* (2002) contend:

*Management efforts to attain what is perceived to be the requisite balance between the quantity and quality of calls present a perennial challenge, in that any prioritisation of quantity has implications for quality and vice-versa. There are no*



*'pure' call centres in which management policy is dedicated exclusively to either qualitative or quantitative objectives. In even the most quantity-driven operation, the aim is to ensure that the customer receives comprehensible information; conversely, employees in the most quality conscious centres are monitored, do not enjoy unlimited time on the telephone and, de facto, are expected to handle a minimum number of calls (p. 172).*

## **2.5 Control and Call Centres**

Much of the research focusing upon call centre work points to the issue of control as being a central concern. Control is not only associated with surveillance and monitoring, as these are not sufficient to secure quality service delivery, but also with the development of an internalised commitment to quality service. It is, therefore, through induction, training and performance appraisals that employees are instilled with the values of good customer service (Leidner, 1993). This type of 'normative' control is explored further. Recruitment is important in this context as social skills, receptivity, service orientation and personality traits are subject to assessment (Callaghan and Thompson, 2002). Associated with control (and indeed, alienation) is the role of emotion in call centre customer service work. Such work is not only a matter of performing tasks efficiently and displaying a thorough knowledge of products and services, but also through the use of emotional labour to create relationships with the customer (Hochschild, 1983; Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996). CSRs are expected to manipulate their emotions (the way they speak, how friendly and empathic they sound and act) by displaying a 'customer focus' or 'exhibiting a positive customer service attitude' and 'maintaining rapport with customers'. Furthermore, CSRs' 'moods, facial expressions and words are subject to supervision'



(Leidner, 1993, p. 30), and they are also expected to adhere to a tightly scripted customer discourse which ‘structure the speech of workers into a series of predictable, regulated and routinised queries and responses’ (Bain and Taylor, 2002; Taylor and Bain, 1999, p. 109). Frenkel *et al* cites an example from their research:

*At AINSV, customer service skills were a central focus of both the content and the process of the training course for new recruits. One of the ways workers were taught to develop customer identification was through role-plays, in which the new recruits were placed in the position of customers. In addition, the trainer repeatedly exhorted the recruits to ‘put themselves in the customers’ shoes’ (p. 206)*

Such expectations on the part of call centre managerial staff are yet another example of how call centre management maintain control over CSRs. The concept of control together with emotional exertion and their impact upon call centre work is now examined in more detail.

### **2.5.1 Control in Context**

The concept of control had its origins in late the nineteenth century sociology when the concept was viewed largely as a method for encouraging conformity to social mores, hence the term ‘social control’ (Ross, 1910; Sumner, 1904). Durkheim (1953) initially explained social control solely in terms of exterior constraints, but in his later work emphasised that social norms, far from being imposed on the individual from outside, became *internalised* and that they are ‘society living in us’. Durkheim also maintained that the essence of control lay in the individual’s sense of moral obligation to obey a rule – the voluntary acceptance of duty rather than a simple exterior conformity to outside pressure. Hence the moral demands of society are constituent

elements of the individual personality itself. Internalisation according to Durkheimian assumptions does not, however, mean or imply that the individual reacts to this structure of social control. It does mean that when a norm, for example, has been internalised, (internalisation being equated with ‘learning’ and ‘habit forming’) the individual conforms to it in her/his conduct.

Both functionalist and ‘vulgar’ Marxist accounts and analyses assume that, at the level of the individual, conformity is a function of the exercise of rules, laws and inculcation of dominant political, social, cultural and in the case of Marxist analysis, class interests. Even Freud’s conception of the superego (the extent to which we develop a sense of conscience) has been appropriated by sociologists to produce what Wrong (1967) calls ‘the oversocialised conception of man’ view of conformity. This view of the individual as the passive recipient of social control mechanisms has influenced, within an organisational and workplace context, much of the work of early labour process theorists, as well as the ‘technological determinist’ workplace studies of the 1960s (Blauner 1964; Woodward, 1965), together with the initial ‘socio-technical systems’ approaches of the 1970s. Early call centre studies also reflect this emphasis, but to a lesser degree. Nevertheless, awareness as to how and the extent to which managerial control mechanisms are internalised by CSRs remains limited within call centre workplaces.

### **2.5.2 Dimensions of Control**

Hill’s (1981) account of control and subordination within the employment relationship remains one of the most comprehensive analysis of the control concept in relation to the work situation. Citing Wright (1976), Hill identifies three dimensions



on which the exclusion of labour from control is meaningful. The first dimension relates to the fact of economic ownership within modern globalised capitalism and is concerned with the direction of investments and resource allocation. Hence within the call centre industry, companies tend to direct investment in their call centres to areas of relatively high unemployment, where labour is cheap, interchangeable and controllable. Other factors such as 'regional accent' play a secondary role. More recently, global resource allocation in the call centre industry has led to the phenomenon of 'off shoring', which involves the transfer of capital resources to the Far East, and most notably India where labour is even cheaper and control over labour is, if anything, even tighter than within the UK context.

A second dimension of control over labour power, according to Hill, is achieved by managerial control, exercised through the hierarchy of supervision, over those who are directly and indirectly involved in the production of goods and services. The third dimension of control concerns the 'appropriation of command' of the physical apparatus of production, 'whereby employees are deprived of their autonomy in the immediate activity of production and of control over the instruments of production' (Hill, 1981, p. 11). In practice, this is achieved by increased division of labour, new technology, which may deskill and/or replace labour and by the supplanting of traditional supervision methods, by, for example, electronic surveillance within the call centre context.

Yet another characteristic of control, as a corollary of appropriation by management, is a certain 'dehumanisation' of work and feelings of alienation that stem from it (Blauner, 1964). The antithesis of managerial control in all its guises is 'worker control' where employees collectively own the means of production. However since this is a fanciful notion within a capitalist society, and recognising the power



imbalance between employees and employers/managers, the control terrain, it may be argued, is permanently in the hands of the employer, and by proxy, management. Nevertheless, there are mitigating factors which may ameliorate the nature and extent of the exercise of managerial control over employees which include human resource management interventions, skill levels, organisational design characteristics, local and national labour market factors and the extent to which there is scope for individual and collective negotiation concerning the 'frontier' of control. None of these factors will, however, facilitate the development of a 'neutral' organisational control system whereby objectives are shared and there are no conflicts of interests and where 'control becomes in principle only a matter of co-ordinating different people's contributions and adjusting these in the light of progress achieved and/or changing circumstances' (Child, 1984, p. 139). Under these conditions control can be regarded as a technical matter, in which an exercise of power is not necessarily involved in certain types of organisation such as a workers' co-operative. The so-called 'optimistic vision' (Frenkel *et al* 1999) whereby management control relations have been supplanted by strong ties among work colleagues, which while questionably characteristic of 'postbureaucratic' organisation is emphatically untypical of customer service operations including call centres within an essentially bureaucratically structured organisation.

Following on from this, a significant assumption in analysing control in call centre organisations is that control is much more than just a technical matter. The control process embodying management control strategies and practices engenders varying degrees of conflict, consensus and resistance, as Child (1984) suggests:

*...there is a conflict of interests inherent in the employment contract which, if it remains at the forefront of employees' minds, will tend to sustain an active and*

*probably collectively organised resistance to managerial control. Such resistance will appear to those engaged in it to offer the best hope of protecting their interests in terms of, for example, the balance between effort required and payment offered...Competitive pressures... (may)... oblige managers to exercise more stringent control in an attempt to reduce costs, increase productivity and respond more swiftly to market changes and may heighten employee resistance even to the point where the continued viability of the whole productive unit is at risk (p. 138).*

### **2.5.3 Control in Call Centres: Child's Criteria**

Within a call centre context, control is both multidimensional and heterogeneous. The matters to be controlled range from tangible items such as the number of calls made and call waiting times, to the less tangible and more subjective such as the quality of CSR-customer interaction. Child (1984) identifies three major structural criteria of control which may be transposed to the call centre workplace, all of which are related and complementary. The first criterion concerns the centralisation-delegation field. Call centres are relatively horizontally structured and there are, in fact, comparatively few levels of management and modest scope for delegation of responsibility either within the management structure or between management and team leader. In effect, the team leader, as considered in the discussion of the empirical work of this thesis, has little effective responsibility for team members. Indeed, centralised authority and control are vested in the technologically based call centre architecture. A second criterion of control revolves around the formalisation-informality continuum. In many respects, extreme formality prevails in the form of Taylorism (measurement), targets and written down quantifiable components and targets associated with the employment relationship. These include a variety of formalised controls such as call



centre employee recruitment, selection, training and regular appraisal meetings, the latter of which may be used punitively, as a method of discipline (Callaghan and Thompson, 2001). Control as formalisation, also known as bureaucratic control is, according to Edwards (1979), rooted in the social and hierarchical structure of the organisation rather than in the personal authority of the manager, and offers management a means of 're-dividing the workforce and tying it to impersonal rules and regulations' (Thompson and McHugh, 2002, p. 106). On the other hand, there is a veneer of informality that resides in the team and team leader. The team leader represents the human face of call centre 'hegemonic despotism' (Burawoy, 1979) who may 'cheer as well as chivvy but ultimately judges performance' (Rose, E., 2002, p.45). A final control criterion explored by Child is that of the degree of supervisory emphasis. In order to supervise closely, the traditional factory or office required relatively narrow spans of control, the purpose of which was similar to formalisation in that it imposed checks or limits on the discretion that subordinates can use. The extent to which this dimension of control is relevant within the call centre environment is, however, questionable, given the mediation of the customer within the standard manager/supervisor-employee relationship, the insinuation of the notion of employee commitment (considered in Chapter 3) as a form of internalised control that does not rely upon observing rules or upon external rewards and sanctions, and the prevalence of electronic surveillance and other technical controls obviating the need for close supervision in the traditional sense.



#### **2.5.4 Control in Call Centres: Edwards' Framework and Subsequent Developments**

Callaghan and Thompson (2001) suggest that an approach complementary to that of Child's, derived by Edwards (1979), is more appropriate to the call centre employment relationship than the basic, if not myopic 'electronic sweatshop' perspective. In essence, Edward's control thesis is a chronological attempt to explain managerial control vis-à-vis the labour process, thereby positioning the control notion within an historical standpoint. In Edward's schema, a nineteenth century system of *simple or personal* control by employers exercising direct authority yielded to more complex and structured forms as organisations grew larger and more complex. The first of these, as Thompson (1989) points out, was of a technical nature, applicable to fordist assembly line and other mechanised production systems within the manual and white-collar areas. Technical control was augmented (but not supplanted) by bureaucratic control, an almost identical approach to that of Child, which stresses the 'development of institutionalised, hierarchical command based on systematic administrative structures (which) routinises the functions and procedures of management, stratifies work and job titles, and governs appointments and promotion by impersonal rules' (Thompson, 1989, p. 145). Even though Edwards argues that these forms of control represent 'both the pattern of historical evolution and the array of contemporary methods of organising work...each form of control corresponds to a definite stage in the development of the most important or representative firms' (p. 21), it is, nevertheless valid to argue, as Thompson (1989) does that even within the 'information society', the three structures of control exist contemporaneously within modern industry, with, for example, simple or personal control being a dominating characteristic of small businesses.

The growth of call centres has encouraged fresh ideas concerning control based on the way that integrated telephone and computer technologies facilitate access and retrieval of data between CSRR and customer. Such surveillance technology enables remote access to and ability to record, speed and quality of CSR work, and the ability via remote monitoring, to reward and discipline employees. The consequences of remote access and control is, *ipso facto*, to make the controllers redundant and, according to one account:

*“In call centres the agents are constantly visible and supervisors’ power has indeed been ‘rendered perfect’ – via the computer monitoring screen –and therefore its actual use is unnecessary”* (Ferne and Metcalf, 1997, p. 29).

According to Thompson and McHugh (2002), Sewell (1998) provides ‘the most developed theorisation of such trends’ (p. 114). Essentially, Sewell proposes a revised model of industrial labour process control that maintains discipline under conditions of teamwork. Sewell’s model draws upon theoretical analysis and empirical accounts to consider how work monitoring undertaken using management information systems (a vertical form of surveillance) interacts with peer-group scrutiny (a horizontal form of surveillance) that operates in teams (including team leaders) which gives rise to:

*“the emergence of a new disciplinary mode in which nominal autonomy and a high degree of control can coexist, through a complex interaction of rationalising surveillance and disciplinary forces internal to the teams...by asserting the pre-bureaucratic ideals of mechanistic control and rational efficiency in combination with the normative post-bureaucratic ideals of self-control and increased discretion”* (p. 450)



### **2.5.5 Towards a Call Centre Control Model**

The apparent contradictory nature of this system (bureaucratic v post-bureaucratic), which is a hybrid form of control, is termed the *chimerical control model* using both horizontal (team) and vertical (management) dimensions as the main elements of this model which is adapted and amended as shown in Figure 2.1 below. The horizontal dimension of the model is highly prescriptive and describes a desired situation which does not and arguably cannot exist in its pure form within call centre workplaces barring a major culture change, and as such, requires equally elusively high levels of employee commitment to peers and organisation. The vertical dimension describes panoptic control systems more typical of many service and sales call centres. Each of the characteristics common to both dimensions (locus of work task analysis; direction of work tasks; evaluation of work done; mode and sanction and reward, and form of surveillance and its disciplinary role) is equated with one of Edward's/Child's three control categories. The workflows relevant to call centres and customer service/sales work are the *service and sales workflow* identified as two of three ideal typical workflows within an information society by Frenkel *et al* (1999). In this respect Frenkel *et al* identify three forms of control, each of which is associated with a particular workflow. The first form of control is the *info-normative*, which is characteristic of service workflows and in which IT-generated information forms the basis for control. The normative element is provided by facilitative supervision on the part of team leaders. *Output-procedural* control is typical of sales workflows, where 'output measurement based on customer decisions (to apply and qualify for loans) is complemented mainly by enforcement of company procedures' (Frenkel *et al* 1999, p.81). Finally, *socio-normative control* exists in the relatively highly skilled contexts of *knowledge work* workflows, exceptional in call centre work environments, where



management and peers (or co-workers) influence the work process simultaneously and where peer or co-worker influence is expected to be the main characteristic of normative control.

Callaghan and Thompson (2001) attempt to adapt Edward's (1979) framework to call centres and argue that in relation to Edward's first criterion, the 'direct', automated call distribution (ACD) allows call centre management to direct the speed, direction and character of the CSR work tasks. The second control criterion of Edwards, the 'technical' is concerned, *inter alia* with monitoring and evaluation of performance as depicted by Figure 2.1 below. In addition, the performance of individuals and teams can be compared within, or between sites, (as many large organisations and firms operate more than one call centre), and this activity is normally linked to the reward and disciplinary mechanisms through formal assessment and review processes.

Edward's third control criterion, the 'bureaucratic' relates, in the call centre context, to the definition of skills and tasks and the specification of behavioural and performance standards. Callaghan and Thompson argue that while many controls are patently external to the individual CSR, there may be other rules, for example, governing emotional labour that are 'normative' in nature and therefore predisposed to 'internalisation' by the CSR.



**Figure 2.1: A Call Centre Control Model**

<b>Vertical (top downwards): Info-normative and output-procedural</b>	
<i>Control Characteristics</i>	<i>Type of control</i>
<i>Nature of work task analysis</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Individual, tending to team. Managers establish initial team norms on the basis of average human and productive capacities; must ensure minimum level of conformance with respect to attaining these managerially defined norms.	In most instances. Often but not always centralised, involving direct supervision based on technical expertise with reward and punishment reinforcing conformity to personal authority.
<i>Direction of work tasks</i>	<i>Bureaucratic</i>
Mainly standardised and formalised. The times needed to perform standardised and formalised work tasks are aggregated and expressed in both team and individual forms. To some limited and variable extent, individuals may experiment to establish their own ways of working within their team.	In the majority of instances and involves breaking down of tasks into easily definable elements; formally specified methods, procedures and rules applied to the conduct of tasks; reward and punishment systems to reinforce conformity to procedures and rules.
<i>Evaluation of work done</i>	<i>Technological</i>
Rational and individual. Evaluation of performance undertaken on an individual and rational basis through work monitoring embedded in the technological infrastructure and architecture of the call centre. Performance information widely publicised within and between teams often via public display.	Whereby the use of technology is designed to limit variation in the conduct of tasks, with respect to pace, sequence and physical methods such as telephonic skills. Widespread use of monitoring equipment facilitates control from afar.
<i>Mode of sanction and reward</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Superior to subordinate. The output of work monitoring identifies both 'good' and 'poor' performers. Managers can then act accordingly to sanction them or undertake remedial interventions such as re-training and dismissal.	Via performance and appraisal interviews and assessments on a regular basis involving line manager but not normally the team leader.
<i>Form of surveillance and its disciplinary role</i>	<i>Technological and bureaucratic</i>
Panoptic (obedience). Surveillance incorporated into the technology of production; provides a high degree of transparency; instils a high degree of self-discipline in relation to the achievement of minimum targets. Customer / CSR (service and sales) output surveillance.	Controls to enforce discipline and standardised performance output. Emotional labour used as a control mechanism also incorporated into training activities used to develop social skills.
<b>Horizontal / lateral relations within teams: socio-normative</b>	
<i>Nature of work task analysis</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Team – individual. Team should go beyond minimum expectations and optimise its performance around the best performer.	In that the team leader, who 'motivates' the team as a whole and encourages better team performance by understanding reasons why better performers outperform their peers.
<i>Direction of work tasks</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Within the team, details of individual performance that exceeds the minimum levels are identified and rationalised so that they become the new norm for the whole team.	As this requires the consensus of the team whereby the team normalises its performance around better workers. Desirable but unrealistic.
<i>Mode of sanction and reward</i>	<i>Personal</i>
The team develops formal and informal means of sanctioning and rewarding its members' behaviour.	In practice can only be limited to 'prizes' awards and bonuses which supplement basic pay.
<i>Form of surveillance and its disciplinary role</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Team members conduct intense surveillance of each other's activities; instils a high degree of self-discipline making team members strive to improve their own performance at norms set near the level of the most able; other forms of peer group pressure brought to bear on those seen to be letting the team down.	Unrealistic within a call centre context where peer surveillance would require a major re-structuring of work activities and a major culture change.

*Adapted from Frenkel et al (1999), p. 137; Sewell, 1998, pp.416, 418; Child, (1984), p. 159*



### **2.5.6 The Hypotheses Concerning Management and Technological Control**

The hypotheses concerning the management and technological control construct posit an association which links that construct with those of alienation and satisfaction and are considered in section 2.7.1 of this Chapter, and section 3.9 of Chapter 3. The hypotheses are that within a call centre context:

1. *Management and technological control is positively associated with alienation.* (This hypothesis is referred to as hypothesis 5 in Chapters 6 and 7)
2. *Management and technological control is negatively associated with satisfaction.* (This hypothesis is referred to as hypothesis 7 in Chapters 6 and 7)

The extent to which bureaucratic, technical and normative regulation exercised by management as a system of control over CSRs is now considered within the context of alienation and the ‘emotion gap’.

## **2.6 Alienation**

The ‘sweatshop approach’ in relation to the call centre labour process is criticised for emphasising states of ‘over-control’ as the vertical control component of the model in figure 2.1 suggests (Rosenthal, 2004). On the one hand, the totalising panoptic prison metaphor of all embracing surveillance and measurement of output may result in a variety of pathological symptoms affecting the call centre workforce, which range from docility and compliance through to emotional exhaustion (Hochschild, 1983; Sewell, 1998; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Zapf, *et al*, 2003). CSRs and other call centre workers are depicted as passive recipients of a comprehensive management



control system over which they have little or no influence. Indeed, this analytical perspective assumes that management have total control over the CSR workforce, while the CSR workforce have no control or sense of control over their work, their work environment and decisions affecting their employment relationship. In order to give credence to this particular criticism of the sweatshop view, the notions of agency and structure and their interplay with reference to Giddens' (1982; 1990) structuration theory are now considered. Much of the literature concerning work alienation advances the contention that 'over-control' is positively associated with alienation (Blauner, 1964; Seeman 1971; for example)

### **2.6.1 Agency and Structure**

In more philosophical terms, the assumption that CSRs have little control over most areas concerning the employment relationship not only represents a 'victory' of structure over agency and an example of 'structural reductionism', but also de-emphasises, if not ignores, the role of agency, As Rosenthal (2004) posits; 'Too strong a focus on the magnitude and costs of management power can obscure the limits of this power as well as the subjectivity and agency of workers' (p. 605). In order to evaluate the argument, it is necessary to identify briefly the meaning of both agency and structure within the context of the structuration theory of Giddens (1982; 1990).

The origins of the agency view lies with the work of Hobbes (1651/1962) who challenged the established structures of medieval society and offered an explanation of society based upon consent and contract. Hence society is something which individuals, in a sense, 'contract into' and is not imposed on them against their will. Membership of society, according to Hobbes, is not just the outcome of tradition, but

rather is the outcome of the individuals' desires to live and interact with one another in the pursuit of their own personal goals. Hence there is a very strong tradition in the social sciences, exemplified more recently by approaches such as symbolic interactionism and exchange theory, which stresses the view that individuals and the action or agency of individuals are the basis of social order, and that it is the society or the state that exists to promote and defend individual ends, rights and liberties. The individual thus has the freedom, or free will, to determine her/his actions, and society in this sense is not constraining but enabling. In summary, therefore, agency is an approach which focuses on the individual and her/his intentions motivations, beliefs, or values as shaping social life.

The *structural* approach, on the other hand, emphasises that it is society which defines, constrains and determines our actions and behaviour (Durkheim, 1982) and emphasises social processes such as organisational and class dynamics in explaining individual and social life and is characteristic of both American and French structuralism (e.g. Blau, 1975; Levi-Strauss, 1969). Classical and contemporary social theorists who avoid the one-dimensional action or structure centred approach tend to conceptualise the relationship between individual and society as interactive and mutually influencing, in which the individual is said to create social institutions and culture, but these structures, in turn constrain individual behaviour. However this reformulation of agency and structure has been criticised as those adopting it tend to accentuate either agency or structure, and/or fail to appreciate that the 'individual is always already a social being and society is impossible to conceptualise without assuming individual action' (Seidman, 2004, p. 143).

In order to overcome these problems, Giddens, (1990), as part of his theory of structuration, argues that instead of approaching the relationship between the



individual (agency) and society (social structure) as mutually interactive, agency and structure may be viewed as different aspects of all social practices. In essence, Giddens posits that social life is neither a collection of individual actions nor a set of social structures, but is rather a process whereby social practice or 'action' has an 'agentic' and 'structural' aspect. Individuals are, according to Giddens, neither adaptive to social structures nor are they primarily rational, calculating, goal-oriented; they are not merely propelled to act by interests, values and needs, and do not simply conform to social norms, but their action involves practical knowledge of their world, an ability to reflect upon the conditions of their action and incorporate this knowledge into their conduct. Thus, individuals are knowledgeable, reflexive and skilful agents. For Giddens, the notion of *reflexivity* (or self-questioning) is central to his theory of structuration since it operates at both interpersonal and institutional levels and also interacts and feeds back between them. For example institutions generate 'expert' knowledge that is incorporated into institutional or organisational practice and into individual conduct. This is as valid within the call centre context as in any other work organisation and social institution.

Within the employment relationship generally the nature and degree of management control and control structures are determined by the extent to which conflicting interests of employees and employers/managers and the mutual dependency of employee on employer and vice versa, can be reconciled (Watson, 1992). To this extent the issue is not one of 'structure versus agency', or 'control versus resistance' but of a recognition that work relationships require reflexivity, and 'involve co-operation, adaptation and accommodation as well as conflict. Furthermore, these things are not separate but are produced together' (Edwards, 1986, p. 5). It is, therefore, insufficient to assume in a structural reductionist way that in the context of

employees' (actual or perceived) general powerlessness over the labour process and the detailed constraints over their working lives, employees and groups do not respond to the controls exerted over them. Indeed there is plenty of evidence from established studies of workplace behaviour of creative responses on the part of individuals and groups over their 'alienated relations of production' (Eldridge, 1971, p.91), which are addressed in more detail below. Suffice it to say that these creative attempts to make something of conditions of work include activities such as reading while working, listening to 'muzak', day dreaming, 'switching off', casual companionship interactions and sexual joking and horseplay. Systems of control imposed by the nature of the work technology, and the need to undertake certain tasks, are not passively experienced but are actively mediated by individuals (both managers and workers) as they produce rituals and strategies for resistance and accommodation. This is exemplified by the role of humour in organisations as illustrated below.

### **2.6.2 The Example of Humour**

According to Watson (2003), humour 'plays a major role in how people both adjust to and challenge work circumstances' (p. 232). Humour, and particularly the 'joking relationship' (Radcliffe-Brown, 1965) serves some important functions within an organisational context, of which one of the main ones is accommodatory in which interpersonal and intra organisational conflicts may be smoothed or avoided. Humour may also serve a dual function (Boland and Hofman, 1983) by '*helping people accept a structure whilst avoiding their surrender of self*' (Watson, op cit p. 233). Managers may use humour as a tool and stratagem designed to suppress or manufacture employee humour (Collinson, 2002) the former of which is particularly implicated in managerial strategies of direct and indirect control and employee resistance to enforce



**‘worker compliance by stopping those workers joking and fooling about at work’ (Watson, op cit, p. 235) while the latter is less commonly used to encourage employees to joke and fool around with managers, provided, of course that these activities contribute to organisational success.**

**Within a call centre context, some of these accommodatory employee strategies are not so obviously open to CSRs because of the nature of surveillance technology. Indeed, the structural reductionist sweatshop approach appears to assume that accommodatory responses of any type are impossible to enact. Hence, in this and other respects, the critique of the sweatshop approach appears to make a few powerful and related points that are now summarised.**

**The first point of contention is that the conception of control utilised by the sweatshop approach is far too monolithic and deterministic and does not acknowledge the interplay of structure and agency: indeed, there is growing evidence that such controls are not viewed as purely oppressive mechanisms but rather as (albeit selectively) providing CSRs with opportunities to re-define their interests and that these interests are actually bolstered by the various control forms operating within call centre workplaces (Grugilis *et al*, 2001; Kinnie *et al*, 2000, Kinnie and Parsons, 2004; Knights and McCabe, 1998). Secondly, sweatshop approaches often fail to identify the diverse types of managerial control which have already been considered earlier in this chapter. In particular, these approaches also fail to consider the extent of and potential for ‘resistance’, both individually and collectively on the part of CSRs (Bain and Taylor, 2000), and therefore do not give any credence to the role of agency as Callaghan and Thompson (2001) point out:**

***Workers, even under the most difficult conditions, retain and articulate agency, both individually and collectively. In call centre research some authors suggest***

*that this is done through workers positively identifying with high quality customer service, while others argue agency is the most obvious through individual and collective resistance to management controls. (p. 29).*

Thirdly sweatshop approaches also tend to disregard or devalue the complex nature of front-line service work as amply demonstrated by, for example, Frenkel *et al*, (1999), Korczynski, (2001), and Korczynski and Ott (2004), which concern as Rosenthal (2004) suggests, the two main phenomena of the customer and the nature of the service interaction requiring an often intense and varied emotional input on the part of the CSR, and the ‘nature of management’s response to current demands for service quality...(which means that)... front-line workers are often subject to a somewhat uneasy, potentially contradictory mix of normative control and bureaucratic/technical monitoring and measurement’ (Rosenthal, 2004, p. 608). Arguably the most contentious aspect of CSR work is customer interaction and the emotion deficit within the context of work alienation, which are considered below.

## **2.7 Alienation, ‘bad faith’ and emotional dissonance**

As indicated previously, front-line service work focuses upon the position of the customer together with the response of managements to demands for improved quality of service that reflects the inherent contradictions found within the ‘quality-quantity’ dichotomy. Thus, CSRs are compelled to display certain prescribed emotions which are at variance with their true feelings alongside demands for both quantitative and qualitative efficiency targets (Hochschild, 1983; Macdonald and Sirriani, 1986; Taylor and Bain, 1999). The increasing recognition on the part of management of the pre-eminence of the customer together with attempts to heighten the legitimacy of the customer / CSR relationship not only carries with it the dangers



of reification and the misplaced notion of consumer sovereignty (Korczynski and Ott, 2004)), but also makes external control more problematic, with some reduction in external bureaucratic controls and an increase in normative controls (Rosenthal, 2004). In any event, the combination of both types of control is difficult to reconcile in practice, particularly within the context of low paid, low status employment (Macdonald and Siriani, 1996). However, it is important to note that the contradictions mentioned above occur within many traditional service work contexts, which many call centre studies do not acknowledge.

### **2.7.1 Alienation and Call Centre Work**

The association between emotion work and the concept of *alienation* is one that is remains largely unrecognised in the call centre literature. The alienation concept itself has attracted a considerable body of literature and research stemming from that of Marx in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (1970). Marx suggests two themes and deduces a third from them. The first is that the product of labour exercises power over the worker and that product becomes an alien object independent of the producer, as Marx stated: 'It is true that labour produces for the rich wonderful things – but for the worker it produces privation' (p. 110). The second is that the activity of work itself is an alienating activity and as such promotes self-estrangement and is expressed in the 'emasculatation' of the worker's physical and mental energy and his personal life. In this respect, Marx argues:

*What then, constitutes the alienation of labour? First the fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e. it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content*

*but unhappy, does not develop his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself.* (p. 110-11)

Hence work alienation for Marx is a state of disassociation and self-estrangement from the job resulting from, inter alia, an absence of autonomy at work which only a change of ownership from capital to labour could reconcile. For Weber (1926/1968), alienation was a rather more subjective experience or 'feeling state' which suggests that amelioration of certain aspects of the work process within the employment relationship would engender a less alienative view of work.

A major problem with the early alienation perspectives concerned the difficulty of operationalising the concept but this problem was at least partially overcome by Seaman (1959) who identifies five constituents of alienation, namely, *powerlessness* characterised by management and technological 'over-control' and an absence of control by the employee over the work process; *meaninglessness* which concerns the inability to relate work activity to the end product – literally 'the work has no meaning for me'; *normlessness* and *isolation* which occurs when norms or codes of conduct do not effectively guide behaviour, and *self-estrangement* when work is a means to an end, focusing upon extrinsic and instrumental aspects, rather than work being regarded as an end in itself. The subjective element of self-estrangement within a call centre workplace manifests itself through feelings of emotional dissonance, humour and of acting in 'bad faith'.

The three main components of alienation, which the survey work for this thesis concentrates upon, are powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement or 'instrumentalism'. Taken together, these three elements provide a framework for analysing the extent to which certain work-based characteristics and procedures such



as bureaucratic management and technical control over work flows, repetitive, simple work tasks subject to close supervision and rigid rules, methods of working (including instructions or in the case of CSRS ‘scripts’) afford a modicum of work autonomy and severely limits the scope for employee participation, involvement and meaningful upward communication concerning decisions affecting the employment relationship.

It is, therefore hypothesised that:

- 1. Management and technological control is positively associated with alienation.*** (Hypothesis 5 as referred to in Chapters 6 and 7).

The three components of alienation are now examined.

According to Sarros *et al* (2002), *powerlessness* represents ‘the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks’ (p. 287). The concept of power *per se* which has spawned an immense sociological literature (see Clegg, 1989, for example) to which notions such as those of authority and control are related, is not the central concern of this thesis. With reference to work alienation within call centres, however, powerlessness is implicated in an absence of job or work autonomy and participation (participation in this sense, refers to the extent to which there is employee input and influence into management decision-making), together with few freedoms on the part of employees to exert control over work activities. Indeed, given the almost universal use of tight technical, bureaucratic and hierarchical controls and constraints, job autonomy, which is the extent to which employees are free to influence their work duties and activities, is an important component of the powerlessness dimension and is operationalised in the research design not only as a measure of employee control over work, but also of technological and bureaucratic

and normative control of management over that work. It could, therefore, be argued that within call centres generally the greater the extent of managerial control over the CSRs' work, the less significant the control and involvement exercised by the employee over his or her work and the more alienated CSRs are

According to Seeman(1971) and Blauner, (1964), *meaninglessness* exists when the employee feels that there is little purpose in what he or she is doing at work, where they feel that they contribute little to the production process, and where jobs are narrowly defined and job tasks are negatively regarded as unchallenging, repetitive and dull (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). Feelings of meaninglessness are more likely to prevail when other opportunities for involvement in work-based decisions are denied to the employee (Sarros *et al*, 2002).

The *self-estrangement* dimension refers to the view that the work process is seen as alien to the individual employee and exists independently of her/his contributions to that process. Self-estrangement can be interpreted, therefore as a condition whereby the employee concerns herself/himself with the extrinsic aspects of the work, particularly where that work is not perceived as a 'central life interest' (Dubin, 1956). Indeed, the instrumental orientation ideal type, first identified by Lockwood (1966) and developed by Goldthorpe *et al* (1968) would appear to be a significant characteristic of self-estrangement, and posits that the worker is calculatively involved in the workplace or organisation and does not see work as a major source of self-fulfilment or self-realisation. Self-estrangement is also implicated in acting out a work role in 'bad faith'.

In acknowledging the influence of structures of control, centralised decision-making, formalised rules and procedures (Blauner, 1964, Braverman, 1974, Edwards, 1979, Child, 1984), it may be posited that work alienation is, therefore, the direct



unmediated outcome of these structural conditions which fragment work, disaggregating it into discrete controllable elements resulting in the curtailment of individual autonomy and decision-making. Hence, the inability to exercise control over work on the part of the employee engenders feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement (Sarros *et al*, 2002). However, since CSR work involves customer interaction which is often heavily circumscribed, the role of agency, as discussed above, is a crucial element within the alienation debate.

### **2.7.2 Bad Faith and the Emotion Gap**

Jean Paul Sartre's (1969) notion of 'bad faith' is very similar to that of the self-estrangement dimension of alienation and Hochschild's (1983) discourse concerning emotional labour insofar as bad faith represents the formalisation of the emotional labour role. Bad faith is also associated with the contributions of Goffman (1959) and Berger and Luckman (1967). In essence Sartre's analysis suggests that the human condition is open to the possibility of bad faith and provides the example of the waiter in order to illustrate the argument. The waiter is seen to be playing a game with his role:

*His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes towards the patrons with a step a little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voices, his eyes, express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer. Finally, there he returns, trying to imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of automaton while carrying his tray with the recklessness of a tight-rope walker...He applies himself to chaining his movements as if they were mechanisms, the one regulating the other; his gestures, even his voice seem to be mechanisms...He is playing at being a waiter in a café. (p. 59).*

To a significant extent, the impression is that of a person being imprisoned in her role, defining herself by her function and to exercise no longer his freedom to act differently or identify herself with a role model such as the model of ‘the good waiter’, as Sartre points out:

*In vain do I fulfil the functions of a café waiter. I can be he only in the neutralised mode, as the actor is Hamlet I can only be in the neutralised mode, as the actor is Hamlet, by mechanically making the typical gestures of my state and by aiming at myself as an imaginary café waiter through those gestures taken as ‘analogue’.*

*What I attempt to realise is a being-in-itself of the café waiter, as if it were not just in my power to confer their value and their urgency upon my duties and the rights of my position, as if it were not my free choice to get up each morning at five o’clock or to remain in bed even though it meant getting fired...If bad faith is possible, it is because it is an immediate and permanent threat to every project of the human being. (p. 60).*

Bad faith, then, according to Eldridge(1971), is akin to self-estrangement and ‘a continuing threat to personal integrity and freedom’ (p. 160). At the level of role performance we should ask the question as to whether the role player is playing his role knowingly or blindly. Goffman’s (1959) concept of *role difference* is a term used to describe the behaviour of individuals who, by knowingly playing a role, wish to express themselves by indicating detachment and sometimes even disdain for the role they are performing or at the very least by creating certain impressions. ‘Bad faith’ in this context could therefore be construed as ‘emotional labour’ or ‘emotion work’. This means that the individual, while recognising her role, detaches herself from it and substitutes something of herself: ‘I am me and this behaviour (gestures, speech, stance) is a demonstration of my individuality’. This degree of difference also



represents a dissonance of roles, which for call centre workers is known as ‘emotional dissonance’.

Within a call centre context a main CSR function as has been noted, is social interaction with the customer. Like the waiter/waitress in our example above many interactions with ‘clients’ demand some ‘organisationally given’ formally prescribed role behaviour and ‘normatively appropriate emotions’ which may create certain ‘impressions’. From a management perspective, emotion work which is defined as ‘the psychological processes necessary to regulate organisationally desired emotions as part of one’s job’ (Grandey, 2000; Zapf, 2002) has the potential to make interactions with customers or clients more predictable (this may be called ‘predictive rhetoric’) particularly where scripting is used and ‘allows the service worker to maintain objectivity and emotional equilibrium by cognitively distancing him/herself from the implicated emotion’ (Lewig and Dollard, 2003, p. 368). However, organisationally required emotions are shown to have an influence upon customers which in turn influence the customers’ emotions as can customers’ emotions influence the CSR’s response. For example, CSRs may encounter situations where anger on the part of the customer is likely to be the dominant emotion – the ‘difficult customer syndrome – and which may impact upon the CSR in various ways. Invariably and perhaps inevitably emotional labour (for instance in the light of the previous example), can become dysfunctional for the CSR, particularly where there is incongruence between felt and displayed emotions, self and job role, and feelings and actions and which may result in lowered self-esteem, depression, cynicism and heightened alienation from work. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). This phenomenon is termed ‘emotional dissonance’ and

*...occurs when a CSR is required to express emotions that are not genuinely felt in the particular situation. A CSR may feel 'neutral' while required to display a particular emotion, or alternatively the display rule may require the suppression of undesired emotions and the expression of neutrality or a positive emotion instead of a negative one. (Zapf et al, 2003, p. 316).*

The degree of dissonance (the discrepancy between expressed and felt emotions) also varies with the length of the CSR-customer interaction (Zapf et al, 2003). Holman (2003), for example identified two types of interaction – ‘encounters’ and ‘relationships’ of which the former is most commonly identified with call centre practice. Encounters as described by Holman, involve single short and superficial interactions with strangers and are standardised with little room for authentic emotional expression. In this type of interaction, the CSR faces a high requirement to express positive emotions, is normally expected to ‘smile down the ‘phone’ and ‘to appear happy, nice and glad to serve the customer’ (Erickson and Wharton, 1997, p. 188) thereby experiencing a high level of emotional dissonance as a consequence. It may be concluded that bad faith, role distancing, emotional labour and emotional dissonance are reflections of occupational roles which, from the standpoint of the organisation, but not the role players, are dysfunctional and, in relation to the role players, symptomatic of feelings of alienation. The distancing from, or even separation of a worker’s ‘authentic’ from her ‘occupational’ self, is present in many occupations, and particularly within call centre work where the separation and/or distancing are often extreme and experienced as emotional dissonance. Hence it may be posited, by reference to hypothesis 1 (5), that call centre work is inherently alienating and the alienative nature of such work is accentuated by organisational control mechanisms and ‘prescribed’ interactions on the part of CSRs with customers.



## **2.8 Summary**

In this chapter, the concepts of control and alienation in relation to call centre work are reviewed. It is argued, through the literature, that call centre workers are subject to high levels of management and technological control and have little discretion concerning the enactment of their work roles. Furthermore, it has been argued that in many respects, call centre work is at least moderately alienating, giving rise to the hypothetical proposition of an association between high levels of management and technological control and high levels of alienation. The associated concepts of commitment and satisfaction are reviewed in Chapter 3.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Commitment and Satisfaction**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter addresses the concepts of employee commitment and work satisfaction, which, in relation to call centre work, have been relatively under-researched. It is argued that both concepts are pertinent within call centre organisations and workplaces and that work satisfaction is both antecedent and predictor of commitment. The commitment and satisfaction constructs are also associated with control and alienation and the hypotheses generated reflect this relationship.

Additional constructs considered in this chapter are subsidiary to the four main concepts and include human resource practices, loyalty to employer, satisfaction with leader, intention to quit, team relations, intrinsic and extrinsic work factors and customer interaction. While the commitment and satisfaction concepts have attracted a great deal of literature, only those aspects deemed relevant to the call centre context are examined in this chapter.

#### **3.2 Commitment and the Call Centre Workplace**

The literature dealing with the concept of commitment is prolific, with most of the research and publications emanating from the United States and which, in the main, assume theoretical perspectives derived from psychology, social psychology and



human resource management. The British literature is relatively sparse in comparison, but there appears to be a general consensus within it that commitment is central to human resource management (HRM) which is mainly associated with the 'soft' variety of HRM (Guest, 1997; Storey, 1995; Tyson, 1995; and Legge, 1995, 2005). Given the size of the literature, unravelling this all-encompassing concept (which is not the aim of this thesis) is a daunting task, which, as Hislop (2003) for example argues:

*'...is due both to the enormous writing on the topic and to the extensive diversity of perspectives which exist on the link between commitment and related concepts such as trust, the psychological contract and job satisfaction' ( p. 188)*

Nevertheless, there appears to be a consensus that commitment is a multi-dimensional concept encompassing work, organisation, family and self (Etzioni, 1961; Kanter, 1968; Penley and Gould, 1988; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002). However, one of the main foci of this chapter is the organisational element of commitment which itself is multi-dimensional, encompassing as it does, not only different types or foci of commitment but also varying levels within the organisation within which they operate.

It is necessary, furthermore, to identify the degrees of commitment – high, low or intermediary. Originating with Walton's (1985) usage of the terms 'high' and 'low' commitment, Watson (2004) argues that from a critical social scientific standpoint, it is valid to consider these extremes as ideal types ' , that is, models of what social arrangements would look like if they existed in a pure form' (Watson, op cit p. 455).

There is no doubt that commitment is part of a managerial agenda probably to a greater extent than job satisfaction, and is unitarist in orientation. Indeed, it may be argued that employers require totally committed but totally expendable staff (Hirsh *et*

al. 1995). The 'high' and 'low' commitment ideal types may, therefore, also be considered part of a broader HRM strategy and both components are defined below.

- *High commitment HR strategies* are geared towards harnessing involvement and discretionary work effort. They are 'enabling' strategies and procedures which 'help committed employees do their jobs more effectively and reinforce their commitment' (Adler and Borys, 1996, p. 93). Employers desire close relationships with employees in order to facilitate the latter's psychological and emotional involvement with the enterprise. Workers have at least some degree of discretion concerning the execution of their tasks and opportunities for career development are part of the employment package.
- *Low commitment HR strategies* embody low-trust and low discretion policies and practices within a routinised work context (Houlihan, 2004). Work tasks are closely specified, supervised and monitored, and workers are allotted to tasks for which they need very little training (Watson, 2004).

These commitment ideal types will be examined in more detail in this chapter within the context of the call centre workplace.

### **3.2.1 Employee Commitment Examined**

For the purposes of this thesis the generic term *employee commitment* is used to include both job and work-related commitment or *local* commitment and organisational or *global* commitment and may be defined as an attitudinal construct focusing on identification with, and loyalty and support for both work and organisation. The subsidiary constructs derived from the commitment construct are intention to quit and loyalty to the organisation.



The notion of employee commitment in its normative sense suggests that there should be a certain degree of involvement and/or 'bonding' between individual employee and the organisation/workplace, and that, as much of the prescriptive HRM literature emphasises, the nature of this commitment, as we have noted above, may be 'positive' or 'high' or 'negative' or 'low' (Morrow and McElroy, 1986; Cohen, 1993, 2000; Frenkel et al 1999; Hutchinson, Purcell and Kinnie, 2000; Batt and Moynihan, 2003). The term *organisational commitment* is used to examine the degree to which employees identify with their organisation. Employee commitment is also concerned with the extent to which employees identify with their work particularly the intrinsic values of work, possibly as part of a 'multiple commitment' outlook, and which, in this thesis is referred to as *job/work commitment* (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Cohen, 2000; Hislop, 2003, Freund and Carmeli, 2003). Indeed, commitment, and particularly organisational commitment, is associated with a number of variables identified by the early literature (Morrow, 1983; Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982).

The extant research considers organisational commitment both as antecedent and consequence of other work-related variables. These include variables such as role traits and elements of the work environment such as job characteristics and organisational structure and control. As an antecedent, organisational commitment has been used to predict employee absence, performance and turnover. Other variables of interest include what Mathieu and Zajac (1990) term 'correlates' such as job involvement and job satisfaction. (It should be stressed that for the purpose of this thesis, job satisfaction in the broadest sense of the term is considered as an antecedent of organizational commitment). Mowday *et al.* (1982), argue that a greater understanding of the processes related to organisational commitment has implications

for employees, organisations and society as a whole. More specifically, as Mathieu and Zajac (1990) posit:

*Employees' level of commitment to an organisation may make them more eligible to receive both extrinsic (e.g., wages and benefits) and psychological (e.g., intrinsic job satisfaction and relationships with co-workers or team colleagues) rewards associated with membership. Organisations value commitment among their employees, which is typically assumed to reduce withdrawal behaviours (or consequences of commitment) such as absenteeism and turnover. In addition, committed employees may be more likely to engage in 'extra role' behaviours such as creativeness or innovativeness. (p. 171).*

At the very least, therefore, employees may identify positively or negatively with their work and their organisation. It should be noted that job/work commitment is not the same as job satisfaction, but rather an outcome or predictor, of satisfaction, hence the greater the satisfaction with intrinsic aspects of work, the greater the degree of work commitment and, less directly, with organisational commitment. Therefore, it may be hypothesised that:

- 1. *Work satisfaction is positively associated with commitment.*** (Hypothesis 2 in Chapters 6 and 7)

Within the call centre context, however, it may be useful, as Houlihan (2004) suggests, to contrast the extremes of commitment on the one hand, and control (addressed in Chapter 2) on the other, and to this end, Walton (1985) argues that organisations have a choice of either imposing a managerial control model or utilising a commitment model. A low commitment approach assumes low employee expectations, possibly a high degree of alienation and a reluctance to utilise the capacities and potential of employees on the part of management. In addition,



employees may have little discretion over, and a modicum of responsibility for, work and work-related tasks. It could be argued that most call centres fall into this category, although there is considerable variation between them, and it can therefore be hypothesised that:

**2. *Alienation is negatively associated with commitment.*** (Hypothesis 9 in Chapters 6 and 7)

Furthermore, loyalty to the organisation is a quantifiable sub-construct of employee commitment and within the context of the alienation construct discussed in Chapter 2, it is hypothesised that;

**3. *Loyalty to organisation is negatively associated with alienation.*** (Hypothesis 6 in Chapters 6 and 7)

A high commitment model points to a facilitative and nurturing managerial ethos, thereby encouraging positive approaches to work performance, morale, turnover and absenteeism, organisational effectiveness and efficient resource utilisation. The construct *human resource practices* (HRPs) concerns the extent to which both senior and local (workplace) management facilitate consultation of, and involvement with employees, the degree to which there are effective communications and the extent to which employee skills are developed. HRPs also include policies and practices governing the degree to which management, and in particular local or workplace management influence the nature and quality of team relations, team management and customer relations. A high commitment model would therefore assume that HRPs are highly developed throughout the organisation and workplace. It is unlikely that a large proportion of call centres fall into the this category, although Houlihan (2004), provides some examples of call centres that do, and argues that it is feasible to have a

'high commitment-low discretion' model that would be applicable to many call centres. It may therefore be hypothesised that:

4. ***Customer interaction, loyalty to employer, satisfaction with leader and HRPs are positively associated with commitment.*** (Hypothesis 1 in Chapters 6 and 7).

### **3.2.2 Two Approaches to Employee Commitment**

It should be emphasised that the emergence of call centres coincided with the decline of the formerly dominant manufacturing sector which characterised 'industrial society' and currently reflect the nature of the service economy of which they are part. Over the past 40 years the working environment and the nature of the employment relationship have changed considerably. Prior to the 1970s, employee retention was, arguably, a main goal for many organisations, which suggests that the type of desired commitment - wanting to stay in the organisation and a preparedness to work hard - (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2000) is based upon this expectation of long service. Since the 1970s, the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism was accompanied, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, by a fragmentation of employment contracts (temporary/short term, fixed term longer contracts and agency employment), the entrance of more women into the labour market, corporate downsizing and outsourcing, all of which have, in turn, changed the nature of the contemporary employment relationship more often than not for the worse in relation to, for example, work intensification, reduction of job security and diminished promotion opportunities (Gaillie *et al*, 2001; Green, 2001; Rose, 2003). Moreover, there appears to be considerable disparity between HR rhetoric and practice with the former espousing the benefits to the organisation of



high employee commitment human resource practices in terms of reduced labour turnover or 'churn', absenteeism, increased employee loyalty, high levels of involvement and consultation, effective team working and good customer relations (Guest and Conway, 1999, Storey and Quintas, 2001) and a greater willingness on the part of workers to provide discretionary effort for the organisation (Hislop, 2003). It is, therefore, hypothesised that:

**5. *Human resource practices is positively associated with commitment.***

(Hypothesis 10 in Chapters 6 and 7)

However, In reality a large number of organisations continue to exercise control-based rather than commitment-based employment policies as indicated by the WERS 1998 survey findings (Cully *et al.* 1999). Nevertheless, even in those organisations that attempt to promote employee commitment, there is a considerable amount of research evidence (Atkinson, 2002; Beaumont and Harris, 2002; Rose, M., 2003; Gaillie *et al.* (2001) to suggest, as Hislop (2003) argues:

*That, as a consequence of these changes, and the extent to which this has led to workers perceiving their employers to have violated the psychological contract, organisational commitment levels may have decreased, witnessing the rise of a 'contract culture', where workers have little loyalty or commitment for the organisations in which they work. (p. 192)*

Hence the commitment debate has a continuing significance and relevance, particularly when associated with changes in the nature of the employment contract and the employment relationship generally. What follows is examination of two broad approaches to employee commitment which differ according to the disciplinary perspective taken by researchers.

### **3.2.3 A Sociological Approach**

The first approach is broadly sociological and sees commitment as the outcome of societal processes that influence any given individual. This is the stance taken by Gaillie *et al.* (1998) when considering what they term ‘employment commitment’, defined literally as ‘commitment to employment’ (p. 189). This approach incorporates the definition of job/work commitment of this thesis, and is considerably broader in scope than the more mainstream approaches towards employee commitment adopted by, for example, Mowday *et al.*, (1982) and Meyer and Allen, (1997). In their examination of the determinants of ‘employment commitment’, Gaillie *et al.* consider three pertinent arguments. The first is that the importance attached to employment is associated with a person’s self-identity which is the outcome of the socialisation process, reflecting, for example the influence of family and school. The second is concerned with work and out-of-work attachments: ‘People can choose either to invest their energies primarily in realising themselves through their achievements at work or through their social relations and social activities in the household and community’ (Gaillie *et al.* p. 190). Third, there is the issue of commitment and job insecurity together with the impact of unemployment and whether the experience of unemployment, particularly within an area of relatively high unemployment has a positive or negative influence on commitment. Gaillie *et al.* conclude that ‘far from showing a decline in employment commitment over time, the evidence suggests that it has remained at a high level for men, and that it has become even stronger among women over the last decade’ (p. 195).

While incorporating some important insights into the broad social influences on commitment, it may be posited that it is the ongoing experience of work, or what may be called ‘work socialisation’, within one or more workplaces that alters levels of



employee commitment in both positive and negative ways. Within the majority of call centres that experience high levels of turnover it could also be argued, within reason, that internal problems such as high turnover and exit rates are significant factors in determining commitment levels in the organisation. It may therefore be hypothesised that:

6. *Intention to quit is negatively associated with commitment.* (Hypothesis 3 in Chapters 6 and 7)

### 3.2.4 A 'Managerial' Approach and Commitment Models

A second approach is more managerial in nature and stems from a psychological or social psychological perspective. The approach is prescriptive insofar as there is an assumption that manpower problems such as turnover can be ameliorated by inculcating in employees feelings of commitment to work and commitment to the organisation and its values and goals (Cohen, 1999; Steers 1977). Moreover there is a primary assumption that a highly committed employee will contribute to and enhance organisational performance. The rationale for this is that commitment to work, career, job and organisation would facilitate the desire to stay and develop within the organisation (Freund and Carmeli, 2003). To this end, Morrow, (1983), identifies five major commitments which have a reciprocal influence on each other: *the Protestant work ethic* which is considered part of the individual belief system; *job involvement* which involves the creation of a strong relationship between worker and her/his job; *career commitment* which is defined as the extent to which the worker wishes to develop and advance her/his career; *continuance commitment* which is based on the worker's calculations of cost and benefit in her/his relationship with a particular organisation, and is considered to be an organisational rather than a personal commitment (Morrow and McElroy, 1986). Hence, the perception of being rewarded

will make the worker more inclined to continue working for the organisation and the converse will result in employee withdrawal from the organisation; and finally, *affective commitment* which connects a worker to the goals and values of the organisation. These types of commitment are illustrated within the five models described briefly below.

#### *Morrow's (1983) Model*

Morrow (1983) developed a model which deals with the relations between the five commitments described above, and work factors. Morrow's model is the first to be based on the conception of multiple commitments. According to Morrow, there are reciprocal influences among the commitments themselves, which create a circular structure based on the work ethic. The work ethic is connected to both continuance and career commitment while career commitment links with continuance and affective commitment, and both these commitments influence job involvement. Job involvement concerns the belief that a worker's occupation is important and meaningful, thereby encouraging the worker to invest the majority of his/her resources (mainly time and effort) in his/her job.

#### *Randall and Cote's (1991) Model*

Randall and Cote (1991) present a similar model to that of Morrow's. According to this model (which utilised the same commitment types as Morrow), the work ethic, which is assumed to be strong, will influence job involvement, which will in turn influence the other three commitments – affective, continuance and career. The main difference between Morrow's model and that of Randall and Cote is that in the latter, job involvement is a mediating variable between work ethic and affective,



continuance and normative commitments while Morrow's job involvement model is assumed to be directly linked to work results and other outcomes such as turnover

### *Cohen's (1999) Model*

According to Cohen's (1999) model, job involvement will influence the other three commitments – career, affective, continuance - as in the model of Randall and Coates. However, unlike their model, career commitment will also have an influence over continuance commitment and affective commitment. According to Freund and Carmeli (2003), Cohen's model, because of the way the various commitments are combined and the path drawn by the model is more similar to Randall and Cote's model than to Morrow's model.

A major problem in applying either of these models to the UK and European context is that of the 'protestant ethic' commitment type which was first considered as an 'ideal type' by Weber (1958). Arguably stronger in the United States than in any other 'western' society, this type of commitment would appear otiose in the UK context, and for the purpose of this research, is omitted from consideration.

### *Meyer and Allen's (1991) Model*

The model of commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) identifies three components of commitment – affective, continuance and normative – and is now regarded by many commitment researchers as the 'standard' model. While Meyer and Allen have, over the years sought to refine their model the definitions of the three types of commitment (or 'component') they identify have remained consistent and are outlined below.

*Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organisation because they want to do so. Continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation. Employees whose primary link to the organisation is based on continuance commitment remain so because they need to do so. Finally, normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organisation. (Meyer and Allen 1997, p. 11)*

Meyer and Allen (1991) argue that common to the various definitions of organisational commitment is 'the view that commitment is a psychological state that (a) characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organisation' (p. 65).

What differs across definitions is the nature of the psychological state being described – hence the three *components* of commitment described above. Meyer and Allen (1991) contend that affective, continuance and normative commitments are best regarded as components rather than commitments as the extent of employees' commitments will vary from individual to individual. For example, one employee might feel both a strong attachment to an organisation and a sense of obligation to remain with the same employer, while another employee might enjoy working for his organisation, but also recognises that economically, leaving would be difficult, and yet another employee might experience a considerable degree of desire, need, and obligation to remain with her present employer. Therefore, it might be more appropriate in some cases, and also in order to facilitate understanding of the



employee-organisation relationship to consider the strength of all three forms of commitment together rather than individually.

### *Penley and Gould's (1988) Model*

Penley and Gould's (1988) model differs slightly from that of Meyer and Allen. Included in this model are three types of commitment which are labelled *moral*, *calculative* and *alienative*. Moral commitment is described as a highly positive affective form characterised by acceptance of, and identification with organisational goals and 'values'. Calculative commitment is an instrumental form focused on satisfaction with the economic exchange relationship between employee and employer, while alienative commitment (seemingly a contradiction in terms unless a negative value is placed upon it) is described as a highly negative affective form of commitment that is a consequence of, *inter alia*, a rigid and overbearing system of control where the locus of control is external to the employee, a sense of powerlessness with little or no authority to influence decisions and change affecting both organisational and work matters and issues. Employees who express alienative commitment continue to exhibit work behaviours that suggest they wish to continue with their employment while ensuring that work performance meets minimal standards. Hypothesis 2, addressed in section 3.2.1, is intended to determine the association between alienation and commitment.

### **3.2.5 Antecedents and Consequences (Outcomes) of Employee Commitment**

Numerous studies have examined the linkages and correlations between commitment and variables hypothesised to be its antecedents. The main type of commitment analysed in relation to antecedents has been affective commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997) and, based upon the work of Mathieu and Zajac (1990) and Mowday *et al* (1982), a number of antecedents correlating with affective commitment have been

identified. These include organisational structure variables such as the degree of decentralisation; personal characteristics such as gender, age and length of service; work experiences such as 'job scope' to describe a number of job characteristics that are linked to employee satisfaction and motivation (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). Meyer and Allen identify a number of US research studies that:

*...have reported strong correlations between job characteristics and affective commitment. Specifically, across many different samples of employees, affective commitment has been positively correlated with job challenge, degree of autonomy, and variety of skills the employee uses. (p. 45).*

Mathieu and Zajak (1990), in their review of the antecedent literature, found that a composite measure of 'job scope' which incorporated several job characteristic variables, was more strongly associated with affective commitment than were the individual variables on which the composite measure was based. Other research reported by Mathieu and Zajak has endorsed the finding that certain characteristics of the employee's role behaviour are linked to affective commitment, particularly in relation to role conflict, role distance (also linked to 'bad faith' and emotional labour) and role ambiguity. For example, affective commitment is likely to be low among employees who are unsure of what is expected of them, or who are expected to behave in ways that seem incompatible and which conflict with each other. It also appears that employee – supervisor relations influence the development of affective commitment, particularly when employees are given the opportunity to participate in decision-making, and where employees are treated fairly and considerately (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

The *consequences* of employee commitment are measured in terms of outcomes. The alleged benefits to an organisation of a highly committed workforce include higher



productivity, savings as a result of lower rates of absenteeism and turnover and enhanced 'in-role job performance' concerning the performance of required contractual duties (Meyer and Allen, 1997). According to Meyer and Allen, there are a number of hypothesised outcomes applicable to each of the three types of commitment (affective, normative and continuance), but there are some caveats which should be borne in mind:

*It is expected that affective, continuance and normative commitment will all be related to employee retention; that is, each form of commitment should be negatively correlated with employees' intentions to leave the organisation and with voluntary turnover behaviour....However, the three components of commitment have quite different consequences for other work-related behaviour, such as attendance, performance of required duties and willingness to go 'above and beyond' the call of duty (extra-role performance or 'organisational citizenship' behaviour). The basis of this argument...lies in the difference in the psychological nature of each form of commitment. (Meyer and Allen, p. 24)*

Therefore, hypothetically, an employee who has a strong emotional attachment to the organisation (affective commitment) will have greater motivation or desire, than an employee with weak affective commitment, to contribute meaningfully to the organisation and therefore will choose to be absent from work less often and will be motivated to perform better on the job (Meyer and Allen).

However, an employee with a high continuance commitment level (calculative attachment) will stay with the organisation not by dint of an emotional attachment, but rather as a result of a calculation that the costs of doing otherwise are too high.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that such employees will not have a particularly strong desire to contribute to the organisation, and the likelihood is that this could

lead to dysfunctional behaviour at work. For these reasons it has been argued that continuance commitment is either unrelated or negatively related to attendance and other performance indicators – except in instances where job retention is obviously contingent on performance. In relation to normative commitment, an employee is attached to the organisation by feelings of obligation and duty, and these feelings will inculcate in the employee a motivation to ‘do what is right’ for the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Hence, it is expected that normative commitment will be positively associated to work behaviours such as job performance and attendance.

### **3.2.6 Established Research Findings**

The empirical research evidence highlights some anticipated associations with a particular form of commitment and the findings reflect the emphasis upon affective and calculative, rather than normative commitment. For instance, the research findings establish robust negative correlations between organisational commitment, employee intention to leave the organisation and actual turnover (Freund and Carmeli, 2003; Eby *et al.*, 1999; Cohen, 1993; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Hypothesis 6, section 3.2.3 posits an association between intention to quit and commitment. The correlation between absence as a consequence of, and therefore negatively associated with, high levels of organisational commitment, and particularly affective commitment, is less straightforward. In general, research findings (such as those summarised by Mathieu and Zajac, 1990) establish a negative association between affective commitment and absence (the lower an employee’s commitment the higher the incidence of absence). However, the association is weaker when total absence or total number of days absent per employee is taken as a holistic measure, which patently includes both voluntary and involuntary absence. Studies that empirically distinguish between voluntary and



involuntary absence demonstrate a significant correlation between commitment and voluntary absence (Meyer, *et al.*, 1993; Hackett *et al.*, 1994, for example) and no significant correlation between commitment and involuntary absence. Hence, studies, which do not differentiate between the two types of absence, will establish a less robust association with affective commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Within the context of this research, however, it was not possible to acquire formal absence data which could be used to establish an association between absence and commitment.

In relation to job performance, there is a consensus (albeit that a minority of studies found no or extremely weak associations) that there is some degree of correlation between affective commitment and performance indicators (Finegan, 2000), although in a call centre context it would be extremely difficult to obtain the relevant data for reasons of confidentiality. The association between continuance commitment and performance has been demonstrated to be extremely tenuous (Allen and Meyer, 1996), with most studies reporting non-significant or negative correlations between the two variables.

With regard to the antecedents and consequences of organisational commitment, research indicates that there are some significant correlations between the constructs and that the causes and consequences of commitment are well established. Whether this is the case in relation to call centres is, however, somewhat problematic due to the relatively unique environments that CSRs experience, the outsourcing of call centre work and the nature of the work itself.

### **3.2.7 High Commitment/Involvement Management in Call Centres: Fact or Fallacy?**

The limited number of call centre studies which incorporate the commitment concept include the significant contributions of Batt and Moynihan (2003) and Houlihan (2004). The relevance of these contributions is now considered.

#### *The Contribution of Batt and Moynihan (2003)*

The first contribution, (Batt and Moynihan, 2003), considers the relevance of three production models which, given the variety of extant call centres, the authors argue, would, taken together, indeed be appropriate to the call centre workplace. The main question to which the authors seek to respond is whether a ‘high involvement’<sup>1</sup> management strategy ‘is an economically viable model for service and sales call centres’ (p.26).

It should, however be noted that the UK literature in this area is confusing. Since much of the call centre literature utilises, to some extent or other, a labour process orientation, the concepts of ‘commitment’ and ‘involvement’ are ostensibly supportive of a managerial control structure that encourages employee acquiescence.

The US organisational psychological literature is quite categorical concerning the distinction between commitment and involvement, where the latter exists mainly at organisational level while the former is concerned with job interest and proximal influence upon decision-making related largely to work and management decisions



affecting work (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). The UK literature in particular, seems to use the terms interchangeably.

In order to demonstrate the efficacy of their research question, the authors identify three models of service delivery: 'At the low end is the classic mass-production model, while at the high end is the professional service model. Between the two extremes is a range of hybrid models that we describe as mass customisation' (p. 27). These models range on a continuum with regard to investment in human resources, and additionally are characterised along four dimensions concerning 'the use of technology; the skill requirements of jobs; the organisation of work; and the use of other human resources (HR) incentives to reward effort' (p. 27).

What the authors call the mass production model is based upon a work regime more familiar to traditional manual workers who perform assembly-line operations as transposed to the call centre context. In the same way that Taylorism characterised assembly lines, so Taylorism is implicated within call centre work operations; an overbearing structure of control, standardised and routinised work, minimal skill requirements and jobs which are 'turnover-proof'. The 'sweatshop approach', (considered in Chapter 2), at least by implication, endorses the mass production model as applied to call centres. However, Batt and Moynihan argue that the application of this model to traditional, pre-call centre service work has been 'uneven' because 'the intangible nature of services limits the use of machine-pacing...and one party to the production process – the consumer – is not under the control of management' (p. 27). However, routinisation is clearly apparent within call centres where CSR/customer interactions are closely scripted and monitored and where economies of scale and the use of technologies such as ACD enabled the establishment of large, purpose-built

centres with national and international catchment areas, thereby taking advantage of increased labour flexibility and the spread of call loads across a large workforce.<sup>i</sup>

The *professional service model*, on the other hand, as applied to the call centre industry, is a much less common phenomenon and adopts a ‘professional / client relationship’ typified by high skill levels, educational and professional qualifications and high – quality services. Finally, the *mass customisation* model (also referred to by Frenkel *et al.*, 1998, 1999) in its various guises represent a compromise between the need for call centres to compete on price and quantity (number of calls made) on the one hand, and the need to compete on quality on the other. Batt and Moynihan contend that ‘if companies compete on the basis of quality, customisation and price, then call centre workers need the skills, discretion and incentives to handle relatively complex interactions with customers’ (p. 30) They further argue that what they define as ‘high involvement practices’ to include technology used to complement rather than supplement labour and relatively high level skill requirements for jobs, may be viewed along a continuum from low levels in the mass production model to high levels in the professional model, and presumably intermediate levels in the various variations of the mass customisation model. Nevertheless as the authors themselves suggest, ‘the high involvement and high performance literatures are theoretically undeveloped and researchers have questioned what is the ‘black box’ linking management practices to performance outcomes’ (p. 31).

In relation to Batt and Moynihan’s’ work, it could be argued that rather than hypothesise that ‘high involvement’ management and HR practices operate in call centres, including in particular, the relatively few highly professional examples, it would be more appropriate to consider overall CSR satisfaction in relation to the commitment construct and the nature of the association between the two, and this is



hypothesised in 3.8.3 Research in service sector organisations excluding call centres make associations between employee satisfaction and customer service (Ulrich, *et al.* 1991), worker attitudes including intrinsic and extrinsic factors and customer service (Schneider, White and Paul, 1998). The association between satisfaction, team relations, customer interaction, intrinsic and extrinsics is hypothesised in a later section.

The research of Batt and Moynihan, does not contribute appreciably to the ongoing commitment literature, but the typology of service models offered by Batt and Moynihan is, nevertheless, useful in the prediction of commitment levels.

#### *The Contribution of Houlihan (2004)*

A further contribution is that of Houlihan, (2004) who considers the possibility of ‘high commitment management’ practices (HCPs) being practised in call centres.

Earlier in the chapter we identified levels of employee commitment as being high, low or intermediate and which are capable of being measured by commitment scales such as that of Meyer and Allen. However, Houlihan is not so much concerned with employee commitment and its measurement *per se* as with HCPs which may or may not operate in low discretion workplaces such as call centres. Indeed, Houlihan does not acknowledge an association, be it positive or negative, between employee commitment and high commitment management practices, despite a positive association between the two having been established by (amongst others) Cully *et al.*, (1999), as part of the 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey. High commitment management (HCM) attempts to encourage self regulated behaviour on the part of the worker rather than behaviour that is externally controlled by sanctions and other

pressures, through the use of high commitment practices (HCPs) initially identified by Walton (1985). A number of HCPs (re-labelled 'high involvement management' practices (HIM) identified by Kersley *et al* (2006), Cully *et al* (1999) and Wood, (1996) include personality tests; performance tests; formal off-the-job training for most employees; profit-related pay; employee share ownership schemes; regular appraisals; fully autonomous or semi-autonomous teams; single status for managers and other employees; and, guaranteed job security. In addition, Wood (1996), (whose research findings suggest that HCPs are not widely practiced in manufacturing industry), recognises as HCPs, job design to encourage high levels of intrinsic satisfaction, and a high involvement of employees in the management of quality.

In attempting to answer the question as to whether high commitment management are appropriate strategies and practices within the context of the manual worker workplace, Wood (1996), concludes that the majority of plants surveyed used some HCPs, but their deployment remains restricted and uncommon and that there is, therefore, 'a rather limited and far from extensive use of HCM in British manufacturing' (p. 242). Of the narrow range of HCP forms that exist, however, there appears to be a pattern to their use which would appear to be concerned with 'selection for trainability and commitment, team-working and group problem-solving (and) as such it should be differentiated from one that is more rooted in either performance-related pay and performance management' (p. 242). There is little evidence to demonstrate that HCPs are any more common within the low-trust, low discretion – high control sectors of the service sector of the economy, which includes the majority of call centre operations within most financial services. Indeed, the continuing and persistent trend towards 'offshoring', particularly within the financial services sub sector would tend to demonstrate that the gap between



HRM/commitment rhetoric and practice is actually widening, and that HR strategies concerning the employment relationship within UK call centres reinforce labour cost minimisation to the detriment of both UK call centre workers and customers.

Despite these reservations and extant research evidence, Houlihan (2004) draws upon a narrow range of studies including her own case study call centres in order to formulate a typology of 'call centre organising' which attempts to demonstrate a relationship between low discretion and HCPs in call centres and which intends 'to highlight differentiation in management approaches to low discretion high commitment (LDHC )' (p. 78). To this end, Houlihan devises, not so much a model, but two continuums that incorporate on each scale the juxtaposition of 'HR strategies' of control and commitment on the one hand, and the 'coercive' and 'enabling' character of 'low-discretion work implementation' (Adler and Borys, 1996, p. 78). Enabling procedures, according to Adler and Borys, assist committed employees to perform their jobs more effectively and so reinforce their commitment; these procedures work *with* employees, 'facilitating appropriate discretion and supporting them (the employees) in the execution of their work' (p. 79). Coercive procedures, on the other hand, work *on* employees, controlling what they do and how they do it, 'and strongly undermine discretion and involvement' (p. 80). Hence the experience of low-discretion work is influenced by the method of implementation of, and support given to, how jobs and the work activities are organised.

The 'model', in the form of a matrix, suggested by Houlihan is predicated on the limited number of call centre studies selectively cited by the author (essentially Frenkel *et al* 1998; Wallace, Eagleson and Waldersee, 2000; and, Deery, Iverson and Walsh, 2002). The four components of the matrix are labelled 'containment', 'alleviation', 'structured employee development' and 'involvement'.

The *containment* dimension suggests that low discretion is supplemented by HCM practices but notwithstanding this, the overall culture is one of control and low trust, the aim of which is to eke out productivity through compliance. Commitment interventions are minimal and rudimentary, being limited to teams, some training and performance management with the emphasis upon quantity (number of calls completed) rather than quality of CSR/customer interaction. Most call centres, it is contended, to fall within this category.

The *alleviation* dimension describes a situation whereby, despite the work being routinised and closely managed, together with a coercive orientation to task implementation, attempts are made to compensate for this by paying ‘lip service’ to commitment practices and ‘investments in cultural support...(such as)... ‘big’ statements such as state-of-the-art facilities, lifestyle benefits such as childcare, or a ‘fun’ environment (Houlihan, p. 81). However, as with the containment dimension, the work context is characterised by low discretion, formalised procedures and close supervision and any effort to secure commitment on the part of employees is aimed at the alleviation of persistent problems of turnover, voluntary absence and retention of staff goodwill in order to improve customer relations.

The *structured employee development* dimension provides an ‘enabling’ environment within an essentially compliance-led HR strategy. Within this context, and notwithstanding the routinised and bureaucratic nature of workflows and work design, initiatives exist with the aim of supporting employees and to reduce role ambiguity. For example, teams are used to provide co-worker support, problem solving and other types of assistance, sustained by ‘relations-oriented’ supervisory strategies (Frenkel *et al.*, 1999; Batt, 2004). Training is used on an ongoing basis, not only to improve product and call handling skills, but also to develop coping strategies (Callaghan and



Thompson, 2002) on the CSR/customer interface. Despite the existence of these HCPs, the low discretion working environment, according to Houlihan, reflects so-called 'hard' HRM (Storey, 1995), typified by managerial control and command approaches to work which manifests themselves, for example, in the formalised approach to appraisal and, less directly, through the use of various employment contracts, a growing proportion of which are of the 'non-standard' variety, and which range from part-time, short-term and agency contracts through to full-time temporary and permanent contracts.

Houlihan describes a fourth dimension of call centre work as *involvement* which 'is both high-commitment orientated and also strives to be enabling in job design implementation' (p. 82). In such a context, routinisation and formalisation remain significant factors relative to the call centre work process, but in a co-relational sense, some support is provided together with a 'participative' approach to problem solving which may be helpful within the team environment, particularly when team members and leaders are jointly involved, and also with regard to the CSR/customer relationship (Hutchinson, Purcell and Kinnie, 2000; Batt, 2004). In this situation, high commitment management (HCM) is seen as part of a considered HR strategy, which according to Houlihan has a semblance of coherence rather than being part of an *ad hoc* approach that typifies the three previous dimensions as described above. This approach, Houlihan argues, is part of a 'soft' HRM approach as first posited by Storey (1992), and, in addition, may also comprise a 'radical reappraisal of HR strategy, job design, staffing levels, task mix and the type of behaviours offered by and expected from CSRs' (p. 82).

There can be no doubt that the preceding two dimensions of low discretion high involvement (LDHC), namely, 'structured employee development' and

'involvement', have little relevance to most call centre operations, although it is conceded that for some 'top end' skilled knowledge work (Frenkel *et al.*, 1999), the latter HDLC dimension may apply, at least in a piecemeal fashion. Nevertheless, Houlihan's contribution is significant in that it posits a relationship between typically low discretion call centre work and attempts by employers to instil certain practices which are supposedly designed to elicit unspecified degrees of employee commitment. However, on the basis of four case studies and relatively few call centre studies that do not seek to elicit commitment levels amongst CSRs, Houlihan contends that the 'low discretion high commitment model persists' and that each of her four case studies confirm this as typifying different approaches to HCM. It is contended, nevertheless, that unless commitment levels amongst CSRs (employee commitment) on at least two of the dimensions identified by the Meyer and Allen scale can be determined, then, and only then can this be related to HCPs, provided, of course, that it can indeed be determined whether these practices are proven to be more than mere rhetoric.

### **3.3 Satisfaction: Issues and Dilemmas**

In essence, job satisfaction is a hybrid concept that has attracted contributions from a number of related disciplinary perspectives mainly stemming from psychology or 'psychological humanism' (Watson, 2004) and sociology. Of the psychological humanist contributions, that of Herzberg (1968) has informed subsequent research which seeks to validate the view that higher levels of employee productivity are an outcome of satisfaction with intrinsic or job-related factors provided that extrinsic factors such as pay, job security and promotion prospects are acknowledged. This strand of research therefore brings to the fore the dialectic of the intrinsic and extrinsic and has attracted the concerns of sociologists, some pre-dating the



contribution of Herzberg, and others in more critical vein who, given the suspect Herzbergian preoccupation with 'manipulatory' management practices, would place the job satisfaction debate firmly within the context of the broader human condition of either alienation and instrumentalism and / or capitalist exploitation (Chinoy, 1949, Walker and Guest, 1952, Mills, 1956, Blauner, 1964, Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechhofer and Platt, 1968). The observation of Mills made some fifty years ago is still highly relevant:

*Current managerial attempts to create job enthusiasm, to paraphrase Marx's comment on Proudhon, are attempts to conquer work alienation...The over-all formula for advice that the ideology of 'human relations in business' contains runs to this effect: to make the worker happy, efficient and co-operative, you must make the managers intelligent, rational, knowledgeable. It is the perspective of the managerial elite, disguised in the pseudo-objective language of engineers. It is the advice to the personnel manager to relax his authoritatative manner and widen his manipulative grip over the employees by understanding them better and countering their informal solidarities against management and exploiting these solidarities for smoother less troublesome managerial efficiency. (p. 235).*

### **3.4 Approaches to the Satisfaction Concept**

A number of contradictions within the satisfaction concept stem, at least in part, from the major social science perspectives brought to bear upon it. These perspectives include those drawn from labour economics, social psychology and sociology

#### **3.4.1 A Labour Economics Approach**

An approach drawn from labour market economics and the labour market itself, for example, would tend to elicit information from large-scale social surveys in order to

identify those characteristics pertaining to individual personal circumstances and / or features of the workplace context which influence levels of satisfaction as expressed by employees within a particular survey (Rose, M., 2000; Clark, 1996, Berg, Freedman and Freeman, 1978). Clark, for example, argues that satisfaction is firstly a measure of individual well-being, and secondly, as a reflection of employees' perceptions and subjective evaluations of certain labour market attributes such as decisions concerning labour force participation, whether to remain in a job or quit and how much effort is expended in performing job-related tasks. Such an approach typically utilises statistical methods such as bivariate and regression techniques to examine measures of work satisfaction in national data sets. This approach, exemplified by Clark's research gathers empirical results concerning satisfaction and relates this both to individual characteristics to include gender, age and education and to work characteristics such as hours, pay, establishment size and promotion. Economists and labour market researchers, sceptical of the more widespread use of the satisfaction concept by psychologists and social psychologists, have tended to focus upon areas related to, for example, workers' 'utility from working' (Hamermesh, 2001) as based upon occupational choice, while nevertheless conceding that 'subjective variables like job satisfaction...contain useful information for predicting and understanding behaviour but (can) also lead to complexities due to their dependency on psychological states' (Freeman, 1978, p. 140)

### **3.4.2 A Social Psychological Approach**

A second approach to work satisfaction stems from the original Hawthorne studies of the 1930s and further social psychological experiments on employee and occupational groups during the 1940s and 1950s (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1964). The approach stresses that satisfaction 'should be viewed as a variable, and possibly dynamic



attribute of a workplace group, generated in, and by, a network of intense informal contacts' (Rose, M., 2000, p. 4), in which informal social relations would enable the researcher to understand job attitudes. Satisfaction, in this respect was seen as a manifestation and outcome of the quality of informal working group relations. Notwithstanding certain methodological drawbacks, the association (however criticised) between satisfaction and informal social interaction has become established (Rose, *op cit*).

### **3.4.3 A Sociological Approach**

A further perspective upon satisfaction draws upon various sociological contributions reacting against the notion made popular by Herzberg (1968) that satisfaction could be facilitated by the emphasis upon intrinsic factors ('motivators'), the outcome of which would be increased worker productivity once the extrinsic ('satisfiers') had been addressed. Many of the earlier sociological contributions considered job satisfaction, or the lack of it, as part of a broader human condition – that of employee alienation (considered in chapter 2) which, within the organization of work, was considered to be determined or assisted by either production technology, bureaucratic organization or capitalist exploitation, or indeed a combination of all three (Chinoy, 1949; Walker and Guest; 1952, Blauner, 1964). Other research such as that of Goldthorpe *et al* (1969) considered satisfaction as an outcome of an individual's 'orientation to work' which arose from and was embedded within the social, occupational and community milieux of the worker.

While numerous researches concentrated upon blue-collar industrial contexts, a few considered white-collar groups such as female office workers (Mills, 1956; Lockwood, 1958). These early studies are significant since they raise issues which are continually occurring and recurring in contemporary workplaces and organizational

settings and which also have certain implications for assisting our understanding of satisfaction within occupational categories. Rose, M., (2000), identifies two areas stemming from this concern that are advantageous in relation to job satisfaction. The first of these is *control of skill level* whereby individuals' degree of work experience, acquired skill, level of training and educational attainment are important factors in determining and estimating levels of satisfaction, and where skill levels prior to entering employment are equally as important as those acquired within employment. The second area of importance stressed by Rose concerns satisfaction within a particular occupation or group of occupations. Data is obtained from the British Household panel survey with satisfaction gradients defined for occupations and occupational groups known as occupational unit groups within the Standard Occupational Classification. The argument here is that occupational groups can offer contexts for comparing individual circumstances and well being, especially for employees who are members of them for any length of time.

### **3.5 Definitional Issues and Assumptions in Relation to Satisfaction**

In reviewing and assessing the importance of the satisfaction concept in relation to customer sales and service representatives, some definitional issues need to be raised. The, by now, traditional and classic interpretation of the satisfaction concept is provided by Locke, (1976) who dates it back to the Taylorist assumptions concerning scientific management and fatigue reduction, the latter a by now rather quaint pre-occupation with possible beneficial consequences of techniques and practices oriented towards reducing fatigue based upon the 1920s and 1930s macabre psychologising of Myers and his supporters (Myers, 1926). Locke defines job satisfaction as 'a



pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences' (p. 1300). The concept, as advanced by Locke who examined around 3000 published studies, refers to a variety of features in work and jobs that influence the workers' level of satisfaction with it. These normally include attitudes towards pay, working conditions, co-workers and team leaders, career prospects and intrinsic aspects of work.

To some extent, and following Locke, satisfaction is a measurement of job and work expectations rather than an overall or holistic attitudinal manifestation. However, certain seemingly contradictory issues arise which stem from the perspectives brought to bear upon the concept. For example, satisfaction may be regarded as a cluster of positive and negative dispositions, which are acquired and learned through experience (Griffin and Bateman, 1986). On the other hand positive and negative satisfaction attitudes may be based at least partly, upon a person's genetic inheritance.

Satisfaction may also be regarded as the outcome of an individual's construction of his or her workplace reality, experience and mutuality of co-worker and worker team leader evaluation. Finally, satisfaction may be linked to an individual's job characteristics and the extent to which an individual attempts to match these characteristics according to what he or she requires from a job (Hackman and Oldham, 1976)

Locke's preferred formulation of satisfaction is one that is adapted for the research of this thesis, in which satisfaction is regarded as the weighted sum of the discrepancies between how much of a certain valued aspect of working a job delivers and how much of this aspect an individual desires or expects. Hence the level of satisfaction is based on the outcome of certain 'weightings' or valuations of different facets of the job whereby, for example, higher satisfaction may arise from improvements in the job

itself, from reduced expectations or desires concerning the job itself, or merely by a change, however induced, in an individuals' valuation so that the perceived disagreeable or dissatisfying aspects of the job are de-emphasised, while those aspects that are more agreeable (and hence satisfying) are more positively evaluated.

### **3.6 Assumptions Concerning Satisfaction within a Call Centre Context**

In relation to the issues affecting satisfaction and for the purpose of this thesis, certain 'a priori' assumptions are made concerning call centre worker/ CSR satisfaction.

Firstly, it is assumed that a certain degree of 'instrumentality' resides within CSRs' views of work in that work is regarded as a means to an end, and for this reason is not a central life interest within the call centre context ((Hyman, et al, 2003). Secondly, it is held that an instrumental orientation towards work is now typical of those in many relatively lowly remunerated occupations such as call centre work (IDS 2003) and is probably more of a reflection of supply for and demand of labour within the local labour market (Gallie, White, Cheng and Tomlinson, 1998) than of factors related to, for example, social class. The third and final assumption is that while call centre workers may prioritise pay, this may depend upon their 'definition of the situation' at any given time, as Watson (2004) contends:

*The employee acting to improve his or her pay packet...is not likely to show much interest in job satisfaction at that point in time. However, once the individual returns to the machine or desk, the intrinsic satisfactions to be gained in that specific context come to the fore. (p. 188).*

The perspective on job satisfaction addressed by this study takes into consideration these foregoing assumptions and, following Mumford (1972; 1991 and Locke (1976),



is largely concerned with a 'fit' between what the organisation requires, what the employee is seeking and what the employee is receiving. Such a definition assumes an admixture of intrinsic and extrinsic factors within, *inter alia*, a setting of control, the weightings of which vary according to perceptions of work-based characteristics, control and organisational factors. Satisfaction may also be considered as the balance of what is put into work, in terms of, for example, effort, and what is derived from work in terms of reward both, intrinsically and extrinsically (Baldamus, 1963). This can take the form of both a rational-instrumental and an emotional-expressive evaluation of the cost and benefits pertaining to the effort-reward bargain as refined by Locke (1976).

### **3.7 Satisfaction and Call Centre Work**

Research dealing with satisfaction of call centre workers remains relatively sparse, (Page, 2003, Holman and Fernie, 2000 are examples), hence the significance of the contribution of this thesis which attempts to establish an empirical link between control, together with other constructs, and satisfaction within a call centre context.

The research deficit may be due, for instance, to reluctance on the part of researchers to grapple with some of the relevant sociological perspectives bearing upon the concept and the reluctance of labour process theorists either to acknowledge or yet countenance its existence (Thompson and Warhurst, 1998).

For the purposes of this thesis, a broad-ranging approach to the notion of satisfaction is adopted in which a number of independent variables such as the intensity of control over work, alienation, work-based characteristics, identification with and commitment to, organisation and adherence to targets are associated with perceptions of satisfaction and well being within low skill environments (Frenkel *et al*, 1998) are examined.

### **3.7.1 Control and Satisfaction**

The research dealing with satisfaction in call centres, such as that of Holman and Fernie (2000), draw attention to work-based characteristics which contribute to CSR stress and pressure and include lack of employee control over how calls are timed and handled, the use of scripts which limit what can be said to customers and the level and type of monitoring. Holman and Fernie also emphasise the degree of control call centre workers have over the job, finding that the less control workers have over the job, the lower their satisfaction and mental health and the higher the levels of anxiety. In addition, low levels of support from supervisors/team leaders and high levels of monitoring and target setting had a largely negative impact upon satisfaction. Other research highlights the extent to which contextual factors are associated with satisfaction and performance levels and include the organisation of work and individual job design factors, the degree of performance monitoring, human resource practices including employee involvement, commitment, empowerment, and team leader support (Holman 2001, Knights and McCabe, 1998; Taylor and Bain, 1999). From the foregoing discussion it may therefore be hypothesised that:

***7. Management and technological control is negatively associated with satisfaction . (Hypothesis 7 in Chapters 6 and 7)***

### **3.7.2 Intrinsic and Extrinsic**

Factors relating to intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions underpin much of the job satisfaction literature (Rose, m., 2000) whereby the former include the nature and demands of work tasks, workplace control and other characteristics appertaining to



the quality of working life, and the latter concern pay and pay-related benefits, non-pay benefits, security and promotion prospects.

In some instances a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors may impact and/or complement each other. In relation to performance monitoring and control (an important output-procedural control function considered in Chapter 2), for example, the cumulative research evidence tends to support the view that performance monitoring without compensatory skills development is 'intrinsically threatening to employees because the information gained (by employers) may affect (either) employees' remuneration or their relationship with their colleagues and supervisor' (Holman, 2001, p. 5). In addition, monitoring without skills development is likely to increase both employee workload and demands of their job, thereby having a negative impact upon satisfaction levels. More rarely, performance monitoring, as part of a management control system may contribute sporadically to employee well-being as it may encourage improved performance and the development of new skills which in turn enables employees to cope better with their work demands. ( Holman, 2001)

### **3.7.3 Skills and Training**

Rose's (1994, 2000) research in connection with a significant study of social change and economic life (SCELI) conducted by Penn, Rose and Rubery (1994) considers intrinsic job satisfaction as related to skill, but not inevitably to characteristics such as management control, style and pay. In essence, it is argued that people are more likely to be satisfied in their jobs when skills acquired as part of the job and as a result of HR interventions, equate with the skills they actually have, or have brought to work (own-skill). This argument gains credence when, much generic skill training now



takes place within the secondary and further education sectors. Three main categories of skill situation are identified, each having three subgroups identified in Figure 3.1. This suggests that people who feel their talents are under-utilised at work are the unhappiest category while those where talents needed and possessed are equivalent are generally satisfied with their work. Put within the context of the call centre, this would seem to indicate that, given the relatively low job-skill requirements and job structure, CSRs are either moderate or low on own-skill levels thereby indicating moderate to low satisfaction levels

<b>Figure 3.1 Types of Skill Matching and Satisfaction Levels</b>	
<b>Skill situation of subgroup</b>	<b>Satisfaction Level</b>
<b><i>Under-utilised</i></b>	
Low job-skill, high own-skill	-27
Moderate job-skill, high own-skill	-15
Low job-skill, high own-skill	-10
<b><i>Matched</i></b>	
Low job-skill, low own-skill	+1
Moderate job-skill, moderate own-skill	+5
High job-skill, high own-skill	+4
<b><i>Under-qualified</i></b>	
Moderate job-skill, low own-skill	+12
Moderate job-skill, moderate own-skill	+13
High job-skill, low own-skill	+33

Source: Rose, M., (1994), p. 261

Put within the context of the call centre, this would seem to indicate that, given the relatively low job-skill requirements and job structure, CSRs are either moderate or low on own-skill levels thereby indicating moderate to low satisfaction levels. This is unsurprising in view of the fact that within the call centre environment, work processes are standardised and embedded in an ICT architecture that is structured to reduce uncertainty and increase productivity. This core design feature means that relatively little organisational knowledge is required from handlers beyond telephone



and IT skills together with some product knowledge. Traditionally, computer based scripts bridge the gap between encoded knowledge and handler, and between handler and customer, thereby engendering a low pay, low skill and low commitment culture and regime (Houlihan, 2001, 2002). It is acknowledged that while skill requirements for CSRs at the recruitment stage are low and may impact negatively upon intrinsic job satisfaction, some call centre work as exemplified in our case research, requires the acquisition of certain 'job skills' as considered further in relation to our case, largely as a result of the training programme and the ongoing modular skills approach which could ameliorate the effects of certain work-based characteristics and control factors. It is also acknowledged that many of the traditional compensatory factors which impinge upon extrinsic satisfaction (pay, job security, promotion, reasonable working conditions) may not act as appropriate compensatory mechanisms within the call centre context as many call centre jobs are traditionally low paid and provide little scope for advancement and promotion. Local labour market factors and internal demographics such as age, gender, tenure and type of contract may also impinge upon perceptions of HR practices, monitoring, emotional pressure and labour, and extrinsics such as pay and promotion, etc.

Skills and skills training for the purposes of this research are subsumed under the human resource practices construct. However, in relation to the constructs of team relations, intrinsic, extrinsics, involvement, customer interaction and employee control over work considered in this chapter, it may be hypothesised that:

- 8. *Satisfaction with leader, team relations, intrinsic, extrinsics, involvement, customer interaction and employee control over work are positively associated with work satisfaction.* (Hypothesis 8 in Chapters 6 and 7)**

### **3.8 Overview of Conceptual Linkages**

Certain linkages that have been made in the general literature with regard to satisfaction and employee well being are now considered, particularly in relation to performance, pay, commitment and control. Reference is made to the call centre workplace where relevant.

#### **3.8.1 Satisfaction and Well-Being**

The term 'well-being', has manifest links with satisfaction and is not, for the purposes of this thesis, regarded as an independent measurable construct. The main reason for this is that the satisfaction concept is utilised as an 'overarching' device which, therefore, embraces most of the substantive areas concerning well-being. Hence, while acknowledging that well-being is intermittently considered (see, for example, Holman, 2003; Gallie *et al*, 1998), it is argued here that the satisfaction notion subsumes most of the well-being concept dimensions. Well-being, like satisfaction, considers the subjective dimension of work. In the theoretical literature, the arguments concerning factors underlying subjective well-being and high levels of work motivation are, it is argued, very similar and is reflected in the widely held assumption that work satisfaction is a crucial factor in work motivation. Gallie *et al* (1998) identify three approaches to how employee well-being is determined namely, the nature of the work task, social integration in the workplace and participation. The first emphasises the importance of the work task, 'in particular the extent to which it avoids fragmented, repetitive work and provides employees with scope to use their initiative' (p. 16). The Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS 2004) utilised a six-item measure concerning job-related well-being. The survey results demonstrated that, as with job satisfaction job-related well-being differed across workplaces to a statistically significant degree, suggesting that well-being is



partly determined by the workplace, and not just by demographic or job-related characteristics. (Kersley *et al*, 2006). This finding is of particular salience in relation to the call centre workplace.

Of the very limited number of studies within the call centre workplace, Holman's (2004) research into CSR well-being in three banking call Centres concludes that 'of the job and organisational factors covered in this study, having high control over work methods and procedures, a low level of monitoring, and a supportive team leader would appear to have the most significant effects on employee well-being' (p. 239).

A second approach identified by Gallie *et al* considers well-being to be the outcome of the degree of 'social supportiveness of the work environment, embracing both relations between colleagues and between individuals and their superiors' (p. 16), while a third perspective concerns the extent to which employees are able to participate in wider organisational decision-making and are involved also in decisions affecting their immediate work environment. Holman (2004) uses a similar cluster of antecedents, including 'job design', performance monitoring, HR practices and team leader support, and also identifies four quantifiable constructs comprising 'well-being' consisting of anxiety, depression, intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction.

Perhaps the most extensively used approach to 'well-being' and satisfaction is that which focuses upon the nature of the work task or work-based characteristics, thereby emphasising the salience of the job task itself for employees' involvement in their work and their ability to develop themselves through their work. This approach has not only led to an extensive body of 'job characteristics' research but has also helped foster qualitative research from a more radical perspective incorporating, for example, the alienation concept. The job characteristics approach aims to identify

elements of the job, namely task dimensions or ‘intrinsic’, which were likely to affect subjective well-being (Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Sims *et al*, 1980), and several of these task elements have been found to be consistently associated with satisfaction, as for example, task and job variety, pace of work, opportunities for using initiative, autonomy, feedback and the extent to which the job is an entirety in itself as being whole, recognisable, clear and identifiable.

One task characteristic identified in recent years, and which has become increasingly focal, is that of the degree of discretion and control allowed to the individual when performing their task. This characteristic is part of the larger control construct discussed earlier Chapter 2 where two main types of organisational control were identified – that of managerial control over work operations and performance. A further dimension of control related to well-being and satisfaction particularly germane to the call centre workplace is the construct of employee control over work which includes the degree of CSR influence, discretion and control over the technology employed and within the CSR/customer relationship and which is considered in more detail in Chapter 2.

### **3.8.2 Satisfaction, Performance and Pay**

The adage that ‘the happy worker is a productive worker’ has been subjected to a considerable amount of empirical analysis which has not revealed a particularly strong association between the two. This outcome was indeed predicted in the early 1950s by Mills (1956):

*‘Management efforts to create job enthusiasm reflects the unhappy unwillingness of employees to work spontaneously at their routinised tasks; it indicates recognition of the lack of spontaneous will to work for the ulterior ends available;*



*it also indicates that it is more difficult to have happy employees when the chances to climb the skill and social hierarchies are slim' (p 233).*

American research by, for example, Iaffaldano and Muchinsky (1985), which reviewed a large number of studies dealing with the assumed link between productivity and satisfaction, suggests a positive but weak relationship, with an aggregated correlation of .17 for normalised statistical studies. A number of explanations have been advanced for this. First, many work milieux provide little opportunity for performance and productivity variations; some jobs are structured in such a way that employees are obliged to maintain minimum levels of performance with minimal fluctuation one way or the other. Moreover, work output of employees, typically within the call centre context, is often linked to those of co-workers via performance targets and, as such, performance and productivity may be, as a consequence, fairly uniform and will probably not be highly responsive to changes in employee attitudes. Second, satisfaction and performance may not be linked at all as dependent and independent variables and may exist as co-variables. For example, past levels of performance arguably result in the receipt of both extrinsic (pay) and intrinsic (feelings of accomplishment) rewards. Should employees adjudge these rewards to be equitable, they may eventually recognise a link between their performance and these outcomes. In turn, this may have the effect of firstly, encouraging high levels of effort and hence high performance levels, and secondly of yielding high levels of satisfaction. Hence, high performance and high satisfaction may stem from the same conditions and not relate to satisfaction in any meaningful way.

A more critical view of the satisfaction/performance relationship is provided by Thompson and McHugh (2002) who argue that the relationship tends to ignore the

operation of social, cultural, organisational and environmental factors 'which will intervene to make a simple more satisfaction, more performance relationship less likely' (p. 297). Citing Argyle (1974) who examined the relations between satisfaction and productivity, absenteeism and turnover, and within the context of their argument, Thompson and McHugh argue that Argyle's conclusion that while absenteeism and turnover did have a direct relationship to levels of satisfaction, productivity only did so for highly skilled or intrinsically motivated workers and even in these cases individual differences were highly significant. Moreover, the same research contends that effort, or 'working harder' had little impact upon satisfaction: While some employees did work harder when satisfied, others worked harder when less satisfied and some less hard when more satisfied.

With regard to pay, it is unlikely that within any given call centre workplace CSRs will express satisfaction with pay. Regarded as part of the extrinsic dimension of work, it could be argued that if work yields no value in itself, work becomes a means to an end, and that satisfaction and fulfilment is sought outside work. The link between satisfaction and extrinsics including pay is, therefore, a positive one, hence the lower the pay the lower the satisfaction (Watson, 2004). This assertion is supported by Porter and Lawler (1968) who conclude from their researches that higher paid employees are more likely to be satisfied. Additional factors that may influence the pay/satisfaction relationship are concerned with whether individuals feel their rate of pay has been determined fairly; whether rewards are commensurate with perceptions of employees about their ability, contribution and value to the organisation and whether employees are satisfied with other aspects of their employment (intrinsic or extrinsic), such as status, promotion prospects, opportunity to use and develop skills and relationships with managers and co-workers.



### **3.8.3 Satisfaction and Commitment**

A Considerable amount of research has been devoted to the relationship between organisational commitment and satisfaction. While it is one of the hypotheses of this thesis that work satisfaction is positively associated with commitment, it has also been argued that satisfaction is, on the whole, an antecedent of commitment rather than the two constructs existing as co-variables (Porter *et al*, 1974). Several studies question the causal ordering of these variables, for example, Bateman and Strasser, (1984). However, Williams and Anderson (1991) and Williams and Hazer (1986) reported findings consistent with those of Porter *et al* and recommended a re-examination of commitment and satisfaction in order to clarify the processes through which affective factors in particular influence organisational outcomes. This argument is supported by Curry *et al* (1988) who found that most of the co-variation between concurrent measures of work satisfaction and commitment could be attributed to common antecedents. In similar vein, Glisson and Durick, (1988) argue that the relationship between satisfaction and commitment may result from some direct linkage between the two variables, and Kacmar *et al* (1999) discovered that the commitment/satisfaction relationship using the OC questionnaire of Mowday *et al* (1979) was positive and statistically significant. Finally, the assumption that satisfaction is an antecedent of organisational commitment is consistent with the classification of job and organisational characteristics as antecedents of organisational commitment by Mathieu and Zajac (1990), in addition to that of Meyer and Allen (1997). In relation to service work with particular focus upon customer service and call centre work Frenkel *et al* (1999) provide additional support for the satisfaction/commitment relationship by arguing that:

*The higher the level of dependence on management, the more likely workers are to ascribe their job satisfaction to management and hence the more likely they are to identify with management and hence to report having higher levels of commitment to their organisation. Insofar as service workers are most dependent on management, we would expect the relationship between satisfaction and commitment to be strongest for those workers. (p. 253).*

### **3.9 The Research Hypotheses**

Consequent upon the review and discussion of the relevant concepts appropriate to the call centre workplace and CSR work in Chapters 2 and 3, the following hypotheses are generated. The hypotheses are numbered as they appear in Chapters 6 and 7.

#### **Hypothesis 1**

That customer/CSR interaction, loyalty to employer, satisfaction with team leader and human resource practices are positively associated with commitment.

#### **Hypothesis 2**

That satisfaction is positively associated with commitment.

#### **Hypothesis 3**

That intention to quit is negatively associated with commitment

#### **Hypothesis 4**

That alienation and satisfaction are negatively associated with each other

#### **Hypothesis 5**

That management and technological control is positively associated with alienation

#### **Hypothesis 6**

That loyalty to organisation is negatively associated with alienation



### **Hypothesis 7**

**That management and technological control is negatively associated with satisfaction**

### **Hypothesis 8**

**That team leader satisfaction, intra team relations, intrinsics, extrinsics, involvement, customer/CSR interaction, CSR control over work are positively associated with satisfaction**

### **Hypothesis 9**

**That alienation is negatively associated with commitment**

### **Hypothesis 10**

**That human resource practices are positively associated with commitment**

## **3.10 Summary**

**In this chapter a selection of the extant literature dealing with the concepts of commitment and satisfaction has been explored. Much of the literature is not directly concerned with the call centre workplace. Those studies which utilise both concepts in relation to call centre work remain relatively limited in number and scope.**

**Commitment and satisfaction, together with control and alienation, are presented as key concepts and constructs which are pertinent to call centre work, the relationship between the CSR, her organisation, workplace, work tasks and teams, local and senior management and the customer interface. The application of these concepts has not been previously attempted within a call centre context and this research endeavours to fill certain gaps in knowledge applied to the call centre workplace. The hypotheses generated in Chapters 2 and 3 posit the nature of the association between the four main constructs and the various sub constructs identified within these chapters.**

---

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The stated aims of the research, framed as research questions are:

1. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?
2. What is the nature of the association between the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?

Hypotheses were generated from the extant literature and identified in Chapters 2 and 3.

The 'hypothetico – deductive' methodology, while being the most frequently employed in the research for this thesis, is one of several methodologies employed. This chapter concerns itself with the dilemmas and conundrums of the methodological approaches adopted for the research together with an explanation and examination of the methods utilised to inform this approach. The relevant methodologies are then addressed and evaluated and an argument for methodological pluralism is advanced.



## **4.2 Methodological Approaches: Dilemmas and Conundrums**

The research, in recognition of utilising multi-methodological devices, draws from a number of acknowledged approaches to social research using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering. However, while the criticisms of positivist approaches and the limitations of quantitative research are acknowledged, it is argued here that the guiding principle for choosing one or more theoretical perspectives concerning methodology is how well they address the topic of the research itself, as Denscombe (2002) argues in relation to this point:

*What drives the research tends to be the research question, not the purity of an ontological or epistemological stance about what the social world is like and the fundamental principles by which we come to understand it. (p. 23).*

In similar vein, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) argue:

*Pragmatists consider the research question to be more important than either the method they use or the worldview that is supposed to underlie the method. Most good researchers prefer addressing their research questions with any methodological tool available. (p. 21; cited in Denscombe (2002), p. 23).*

Hence, the research for the purposes of this thesis utilises both positivist and interpretive approaches, including elements of critical realism, in recognition of the unresolved theoretical debate that appears to place both positivism and interpretivism into two diametrically opposed camps. This ‘multi-methodological’ orientation, it is argued, is highly appropriate to the admixture of call centre workplaces as research contexts, to the

social processes that occur within them, to the meanings that employees give to their work and to structures of work and organisation, and of to the research questions themselves. The various methodological approaches relevant to the concerns of this thesis are now examined.

### **4.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods**

Qualitative research utilises a multiplicity of methods of an interpretive, or ‘naturalistic’ approach to the subject matter and emphasises the processes and meanings that occur naturally (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), and studies phenomena in the contexts where they naturally occur and ‘uses social actors’ meanings to understand the phenomena’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2). Qualitative research also ‘addresses questions about how social experience is created and given meaning and produces representations of the world that make the world visible’ (Gephart, 2004, p. 454), and is often designed at the same time as it is being done, ‘is open to unanticipated events, and it offers holistic depictions of realities that cannot be reduced to a few variables’ (Gephart, *op cit*, p. 454).

Qualitative work is highly narrative and provides accounts of verbal interactions (who said what to whom, as well as how, when and why). It therefore provides a narrative of peoples’ views of reality and relies on words and talk to help create narrative texts.

Qualitative researchers also ‘seek to explain research observations by providing well-substantiated conceptual insights that reveal how broad concepts and theories operate in particular cases’ (*ibid.*, p. 454). On the other hand, quantitative research emphasises measurement and analysis of causal relations among variables and uses the hypothetical-



deductive model in order to establish important relationships between variables and to test general propositions.

The distinction between the two approaches does not, of course, imply that they are mutually exclusive, but rather that they overlap. The difference between them, however, raises two critical issues (Gephart, 2004). Firstly, qualitative research draws upon the actors' definitions of the situation and the meanings given to experience of the realities of everyday life. In doing so, 'it builds social science constructs from members' 'concepts-in-use' and focuses on the socially constructed nature of reality ( Berger and Luckman, 1967; Schutz, 1973). The second issue raised by Gephart is that whereas quantitative research codes, counts and quantifies phenomena in an attempt to represent concepts in a meaningful way, qualitative research starts and finishes with words, talk and texts as meaningful representations of concepts. The latter, therefore, 'has an inherently literary and humanistic focus, whereas quantitative research is grounded in mathematical and statistical knowledge' (Gephart, *op cit*, p. 455).

An important value of qualitative research is, therefore, description and understanding of the actual human interactions, meanings and processes that comprise real-life organisational settings – and this aspect has been relatively underemphasized in much organisational research. An important concern for social scientific, organisational and management research is to provide a balance between the essentially humanistic and literary aspects of qualitative research that focus on meanings with the demands for scientific knowledge based on mathematical and statistical reasoning.

A further crucial, if not obvious issue that should not be overlooked is that qualitative research involves both data collection and data analysis, and both steps in the research

process can be qualitative or quantitative. This can result in confusion concerning choice of method of data analysis as it could be argued that, for example, quantitative analysis of qualitative data requires data to be quantified – and that this is, therefore, quantitative research. As Gephart puts it:

*“...management researchers face many mathematical, statistical and measurement challenges when they apply quantitative or calculative techniques or perspectives to qualitative data. These challenges become obscured when research that uses quantitative tools of analysis is labelled qualitative research” (p. 455)*

#### **4.4 Combining Research Methods**

Many research projects such as the research for this study utilise a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation, either weighted towards the former or the latter or with both methods being given more or less equal attention. The social survey is a case in point. Put simply, a social survey is a research strategy, which involves the strategic decision to collect the same information about all cases in a sample (Aldridge and Levine, 2001). Items of information, or variables, may be classified into three categories of characteristics comprising attributes (sex, age, marital status, previous occupation and work experience), behaviour (involving, for example, questions of substance, causality and frequency and opinions, preferences, attitudes, and beliefs. Quantitative research approaches use experimental designs or, more commonly, structured questionnaires to test hypotheses about the causal relationship or association between variables which may be either independent or dependent on the basis of



questionnaire data subjected to statistical analysis. The questionnaire itself may well be based upon one or more established scales which seek to ground concepts such as commitment, control and satisfaction. In this way, concepts are reductively transformed into measurable constructs. Statistical tests are utilised in order to determine the extent to which any differences in the measurement of outcomes (dependent variables) are due to each independent variable. The extent to which the study for this thesis utilises these methods is explained in Chapter 5.

It is, however, a misapprehension to consider the survey as a pre-eminently quantitative research strategy. Indeed, surveys should, and do, allow for the simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative types of data (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Examples of the latter include open-ended questions within a more structured questionnaire, face-to-face interviews of an unstructured or semi-structured nature, and participant or non-participant observation.

The combination of both strategies raises a number of concerns identified by Flick (2002). One concern relates to epistemological and methodological incompatibilities of the quantitative and qualitative approaches which is often linked to different theoretical positions such as positivism versus constructivism or post positivism and as Flick contends 'Sometimes these incompatibilities are mentioned as different paradigms and both camps are seen as involved in paradigm wars (for example, Lincoln and Guba, 1985)' (p. 263). A second concern, as described above, involves research designs and strategies which combine or integrate the use of quantitative and qualitative data and / or methods and selecting which methods are most appropriate. For example, subjective experience and meanings attached to specific aspects of a call centre working

environment may be more appropriately analysed by the use of qualitative methods such as the interview, whereas information concerning frequency of consultation warrants the application of quantitative methods of analysis. Thirdly, the question of which method dominates the other is at least implicit in research projects. For example, an exploratory study with unstructured or semi-structured interviews is seen as 'preliminary' and will, therefore, precede the 'main' part of the survey through collection of data with questionnaires. In addition, interview statements may be tested and explained by their confirmation and frequency in the questionnaire data. A less persuasive view accepts the superiority of qualitative data over quantitative data. Cicorel (1981), for example, argues that qualitative methods are more appropriate than quantitative methods in examining small-scale social science questions.

The approach taken for the purpose this thesis, is one which combines both qualitative and quantitative methods where the different methodological perspectives complement rather than rival each other, and, therefore, none of the methods so combined are regarded as superior or preliminary. Regardless of whether or not the methods are used contemporaneously or one after the other, they should be seen as more or less equal in their role in the study.

A simple procedure which is adopted for the purposes of the research for this thesis is that the triangulation (combining qualitative and quantitative methods) of quantitative and qualitative research focuses upon a single context 'the call centre workplace'. Within that context the sample population completes a questionnaire as a first step and then a representative, but much smaller sample provides additional interview data. The interview data may then provide evidence of a qualitative nature. Erzberger (2002) argues



that there are three types of outcome arising from the triangulation procedure; these are, firstly, that qualitative and quantitative results converge, mutually confirm and support the same conclusions; secondly that both sets of results focus upon different aspects of an issue (for example, subjective meanings attached to specific aspects of work, co-workers or management) but are complementary to each other and lead to a fuller picture; and, thirdly that qualitative and quantitative results are divergent or contradictory. It is, therefore entirely feasible that a research strategy will yield one or more of these outcomes, and if the interest in combining qualitative and quantitative research is focused upon a broader, fuller, and 'better' knowledge of the issue(s), all three outcomes will be useful despite there being problems of validation. In this connection, Flick (2002) states:

*What is needed... is a theoretical interpretation or explanation of the divergence and contradictions (within the outcomes). If both (quantitative and qualitative) approaches were combined in order to validate findings, the second and third category of outcomes is an indicator of the limits of validity. (p. 268).*

The problems associated with combining qualitative and quantitative research have not been adequately resolved (Flick, 2002). Attempts to integrate both approaches often end up in a 'one-after-the-other', with different preferences, a 'side-by-side', with various degrees of independence of either strategies, or a dominance of 'one over the other', also with different preferences. Integration is often restricted to the level of the research design. The questions that need to be addressed in formulating any research design utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods include firstly whether both approaches are given equal weight in the plan of the research project, in the relevance of

the results and in evaluating the quality of the research itself; secondly whether both approaches are applied separately, or related to each other. For example, many studies including those within a call centre context use qualitative and quantitative methods fairly independently and ultimately the integration of both parts only refers to comparing the results of both. A third issue concerns the logical relation of both approaches in relation to how and the extent to which they are sequenced and how or the extent to which they are integrated in a multi-methods design. Finally, the criteria used for evaluating the research in its totality need to be identified.

The research undertaken in this thesis attempts to address some of these issues. In the first instance, however, it is necessary to consider the philosophical underpinnings of the research methodologies which underpin this investigation. One longstanding investigatory tradition has its origins in positivist philosophy which encapsulates the so-called 'scientific method' approach to research and is considered below.

#### **4.5 The Relevance of Positivism to This Study**

Despite the increasing emphasis upon the qualitative in management research (see Fleetwood and Ackroyd, 2004, for example) many management journals such as *The Academy of Management Journal* and *The Journal of Applied Psychology* contain research output inspired by the positivist tradition, endorsed by researchers from a number of social science disciplines and fields. Indeed, the research for this thesis utilises as one methodology an adapted form of approach labelled 'post-positivism'. What follows, through a critique of positivism and other methodologies, is a justification for the use of methodologies that support both qualitative and quantitative approaches as applied to the research context. While it is not the intention here to re-tread very



thoroughly trodden ground and reopen the positivist dispute in any detail, the critique of positivism is justification *per se* for the use of methodological approaches both related and unrelated to positivism.

#### **4.5.1 Positivism in Context**

Positivism underpins the quantitative approach to research and its underlying assumption is that science is the study of an objectively existing reality that lies outside the discourse of science and is a philosophy that argues for the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the social sciences and thereby presupposes the unity of the sciences. As with many philosophical traditions, positivism has been interpreted and defined in different ways. Outhwaite (1987), for example, distinguishes three generations, two of which are identified here; that of the nineteenth century positivists such as Auguste Comte (1876) and Herbert Spencer (1971) and logical positivism which is associated with the work of Hempel, and which emphasises the importance of value-free evidence, hard facts and prediction in policy development by government and other organisations. Comte, for example, had a scientific vision of the social sciences and, in particular, sociology which he saw as resting on a strong foundation of observation and facts. Comte's positivism is embedded within his theory of progress and evolution, and in this sense, as Lee and Newby (1983) point out: 'there is a sense in which all theories of progress and evolution *can* be called positivist – largely because of their naïve assumptions about the prospects for a science of society (and perhaps the possibility of 'discovering' the laws which govern social progress' (p. 73).

Delanty identifies five guiding principles that provide a taxonomy of positivism as both philosophy and methodology. These are firstly, that positivism stresses the unity of the

scientific method, or 'scientism'. The main positivist assumption here is that there is no difference between the methods utilised by both natural and social sciences and that the natural sciences are taken to be the model for all the sciences. Scientism hence encapsulates the view that the meaning of knowledge is defined by naturalistic science alone. A second principle deals with the subject matter of science. It is contended that science is the study of reality, which is external to science itself and which can be reduced to observable units by a process of reductionism. Hence positivism involves reductionism, a view that scientific truth corresponds to reality and the notion that nature, which is external to science, can be neutrally observed. A third positivist principle is that of empiricism; that science is based entirely on that which can be observed and verified by means of experimental method, as Delaney states:

*The scientist carries out experiments in order to uncover objectively existing, general laws from which hypotheses can be made that can be used to predict what will happen. In general, the kinds of laws positivism seeks to uncover are causal laws and have the power of explanation. (p. 12)*

However, it should be noted that empiricism and positivism can exist independently of one another as methodological approaches in that the latter approach assumes that data is theory-driven and designed to test the accuracy of the theory, while empiricism may be regarded as a research method which has not referred explicitly to the theory guiding its data collection methods (May, 2001) where 'the facts speak for themselves' (Bulmer, 1982, p. 31). Fourthly, a positivist approach assumes that science does not make judgements concerning its subject matter and is a neutral activity free of social and ethical values. Moreover, since positivism is committed to the pursuit of scientific truth,



'it is arrived at independently of ethical self-reflection or personal subjective elements since truth is a verifiable and explanatory statement about an objectively existing reality' (Delanty, 2000, p. 13). Finally, positivism is concerned with the pursuit of technically useful knowledge and takes the form of 'instrumental, bureaucratic social science associated with the professionalisation of social science in the twentieth century' (*ibid* p. 13). Put slightly differently, the scientific knowledge gained using a positivist approach is clothed in the language of scientific objectivity in order to disguise its political nature (Mills, 1970); that knowledge is, therefore, instrumental.

#### **4.5.2 A Critique Of Positivism**

During the inter-war years, positivism, or 'logical positivism' as it became known, as philosophy and research methodology reigned supreme, having established a pre-eminence ever since the 'founding fathers' of sociology (Compte and Durkheim, for example) translated the methods of natural science to the social. It was not until the advent of Weberian sociology with associated concepts such as 'verstehen' (see below), subjective meanings and 'value relevance' that positivism began to be challenged. Subsequent critiques fall into one of two camps; one challenges the dominance or hegemony of natural science method over the social from an interpretive or hermeneutical standpoint, from the Weberian through to the Marxist and critical theory standpoint of the Frankfurt School.

#### **4.5.3 The Contribution of Popper**

The second camp is primarily based upon the work of Popper (1959), which provides a refutation of the main tenets of positivism, and has attracted the label 'post-positivism'. It is, however, important to note that, apart from Popper, there were other critics of

induction such as Nagel, (1961) and Zetterberg, (1966). In *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Popper identified the main principles of what he called 'critical rationalism', the most important of which is that the principle of verification must be replaced by the principle of falsification involving the hypothetico-deductive method referred to earlier in the chapter (also known as 'deductive-nomological' or the 'covering-law' model (Hempel, 1965)). Popper argued that the logic of science is not an inductive process incorporating observation of data to theory or hypothesis construction. Popper's argument against verification is illustrated by his well-known exemplar that 'no matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that *all* swans are white' (p. 27).

The principle of falsification proposed by Popper as an alternative, states that instead of proceeding inductively, science progresses deductively through attempts to falsify the results of previous theories, and hence, science proceeds from the universal (scientific hypotheses) to the particular. Popper thus demolishes one of the beliefs of positivism, namely that science proceeds from observation of data by means of experiments, which, when repeated are verified, allowing us to infer general laws about the nature of reality. He demonstrates that the logic of science is determined not by a path to absolute verifiable knowledge but by attempts to falsify the results of other theories, and, therefore, the theories science provides are only ones that have withstood falsification. As Delancy, (2000) posits:

*Critical rationalism breaks from certain defining tenets of positivism. It rejects the naïve inductionist notion that the scientist observes reality without theoretical predispositions, for the scientist always operates from a theory that has withstood*



*attempts to falsify it.... While upholding the unity of scientific method for all the sciences, Popper concedes that the subject matter of the social sciences differs from that of the natural sciences. The nature of causality in society, where it is contingent, cannot be compared with natural causality, where it is always invariable. Moreover, it is the aim of the natural sciences to make prediction possible, while in the social sciences predictions can be self-fulfilling prophecies. (p. 32-33).*

In summary, the importance of Popper's critical rationalism is that, firstly, it has been widely advocated as an ideal form of explanation (Sayer, 2000), and secondly, that he rejects the 'naturalistic fallacy' of positivism, not only in social science but also and mainly in natural science. In rejecting the positivist conception of natural science as a theory of how natural science operates, Popper undermined the possibility of a positivistic social science.

#### **4.5.4 Implications of Popper's Argument for methodology**

Popper's stance raises some critical issues for social science methodology. The assumption that data are theory-driven means that the theory is sustained only as long as it is corroborated by empirical evidence. However, should the theory or hypothesis generated by it be empirically falsified, would this be reason enough to reject the theory? It could be argued in this connection that a deviant or exceptional piece of evidence is discovered which arguably does not falsify the theory as such. Hence, pragmatically, until a new theory appears which explains the 'deviant' research findings, it is unlikely that existing theories would be abandoned as long as they still assist in the explanation of other phenomena or findings (May, 2001). Indeed, scientists and social scientists are likely to retain fundamental elements within their theoretical armoury that

are 'resistant' to falsification (Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970). A further issue is that both deductivist and inductivist approaches assume that, because of adherence to 'scientific method', theories can be generated independently of researchers' preconceptions or values. This assumption is highly problematic as it assumes that aspects of the social world are 'taken for granted' and is not subjected to empirical falsification. Rather, it could be assumed that actors within the social world interpret and give meaning to their actions and behaviour, and as May argues, 'To assume that we can separate these activities from scientific fact may not only be an impossibility, but also undesirable for the production and for the production and practice of social science itself' (p. 34). To be sure, Popper, in the light of criticism, did revise some of his earlier claims (Popper, 1972, 1976), the most significant of which was that the logic of science does not only depend on the principle of falsifiability, for a theory is discarded not when it has been falsified but only when a new theory is there to replace it.

#### **4.5.5 The Kuhnian Paradigm: An Alternative to Popper**

Kuhn's work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970), offers probably the most sophisticated alternative approach to that of Popper. His main thesis is that science proceeds neither inductively (observation to theory) nor by the falsification of theory as argued by Popper. The most important factor in science, according to Kuhn, is the shift from 'normal' science to 'revolutionary' science. Evidence that does not support theories is regarded as only a temporary problem to which future research is directed. In this way theories are not falsified, but become the subject of continuous research – and this is what Kuhn calls 'normal science', defined by him as:



*Research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice. (Kuhn, Quoted in Barnes (1991), p. 87}*

Given that any deviant or exceptional data serve as the basis for future research, the theory is never falsified because there will always be evidence which both supports and refutes it. In this sense, Kuhn refers to scientific *paradigms* which do not (unlike inductivism and deductivism), provide rules which the methods of research must rigorously follow, but provide examples of good practice with researchers (scientists) themselves determining how the model is to be used. Kuhn goes on to argue;

*Thus, scientists doing normal science do not merely have to agree upon what should serve as the basis of their work; they also have to agree upon how it should serve that purpose in every particular case. They are obliged to employ a paradigm much as a judge employs an accepted judicial decision. (In Barnes *op cit*, p. 88).*

Kuhn thus reduces Popper's principle of falsifiability to problem solving within normal science, the solutions to which are contained in the paradigm in which they operate; researchers are unwilling and perhaps unable to look outside the normal science paradigm, 'are reluctant to break from a paradigm that offers them security (Delanty, p. 34). Eventually, if problems or anomalies persist, the consequence might be serious questioning and debate about the fundamentals of the paradigm, ushering in a period of 'extraordinary science' and the possible emergence of a new paradigm in order to solve the anomaly or anomalies, the new paradigm being accepted as normal science thereby establishing a new consensus, but only if there is a new paradigm 'in waiting' as a

paradigm is rejected only when a new one is available. Furthermore, Kuhn's refutation of positivism is on the grounds that while verification may be possible within one paradigm, the same set of facts could imply a different outcome in a different paradigm. Thus Kuhn regards science as a conservative endeavour that is challenged only by what he calls 'scientific revolutions' – the dialectical juxtaposition of paradigms of the 'normal' and the 'extraordinary', and it is at this point that the new replaces the old.

Kuhn's importance in this 'post empiricist' conception of science lies in his contention that progress in science depends neither on induction or deduction, but on revolutionary breaks in paradigms and that observation does not lead to theory. His starting point is not 'reality' but scientific constructions (Trigg, 1985). It is neither the accumulation of evidence nor the ability to falsify a theory that explains how science works and therefore account for scientific revolutions. Rather, it is the impact of non-scientific factors such as cultural values, which make some scientists blind to the implications of an anomaly and open the eyes of others, usually of a younger generation entering the field and bringing with them a new set of ideas and problems which are researched and which become the accepted wisdom. There is, therefore a misalignment that occurs between practices and assumptions, a process that leads to what Bordieu (1993) refers to as 'heresy'. As May (2001) puts it:

*Despite the change of personnel, the conclusions of the discipline would, once again, not reflect some 'objective reality' independent of the minds of scientists, but would depend on 'the scientist's theoretical preferences rather than the empirical evidence.*

(Papineau, 1978, p. 36)



The implications for social sciences of Kuhnian post-empiricism have been ambivalent, despite the subsequent critiques of both Lakatos (1978) and Feyerabend (1975). To be sure, Kuhn succeeded in demolishing positivist-driven assumptions which abounded in the natural sciences and this, of course, impacted upon the positivist influence within the social sciences. However, it is important to recognise that the Kuhnian paradigms, which are more suited to the natural sciences, fit relatively uneasily within, and cannot be applied as effectively to, the social sciences. It could, therefore, be argued, as Delanty does, that 'social scientists are too divided to accept paradigms and it is therefore questionable if something like 'normal science' characterises the social sciences, where there is a plurality of competing paradigms available' (p. 37).

Kuhn's contribution has, nevertheless, advanced the post-empiricist critique further, notably from those concerning realism and constructivism, where the former is represented by the critical realist contribution of Bhaskar, (1978; 1979; 1986; 1991; 1993) who rejects positivism and scientific method in favour of an emancipatory theory of science that is both explanatory and interpretive while retaining claims of science to objectivity and truth.

Constructivism is a more amorphous movement that encapsulates the pragmatic social science of Habermas (1988), post-modernism and feminist epistemology, for example. Before considering realism and constructivism in relation to their relevance to this thesis, the significance of Poppers' critical rationalism and the post-empiricism of Kuhn concerning the methodologies selected for the research of this thesis will be briefly examined. The historical alternative to positivism, which is based upon hermeneutic and interpretive approaches, is then considered.

#### **4.6 The Significance of the Contributions Of Popper and Kuhn for this Thesis: Some Reservations and Justifications**

The methods employed in this thesis embody both the qualitative and quantitative. The 'natural science' model of research methodology is still taken as 'good practice' by many social science and management researchers, particularly within psychology and social psychology disciplines related to research within the context of work. Many concepts, including those that are identified in chapters 2 and 3 lend themselves to quantification and hypothetical-deductive approaches as suggested by Popper, and which may require falsification or verification of hypotheses . The justification for using these approaches concern rigour as a research skill that involves precise measurement, a certain degree of objectivity or 'open-mindedness' and careful record-keeping such as the recording of interview transcripts. In addition, those who evaluate the research may well judge the research according to the criteria drawn from the natural science model (Denscombe, 2002).

Research methods used in the research for this thesis therefore entail a research process which fulfils a number of requirements for, and aims of, 'good' research which combines 'rational thought', and systematic investigation to produce new knowledge These include, (not necessarily in order of undertaking the research), firstly an understanding of the properties of whatever it is to be studied which includes facts concerning the research context, and in the case of call centres, the relative importance of the phenomenon all of which assist in the development of the main research questions. Secondly, there is an imperative to identify links and associations that are themselves derived from the main



research questions. Progress at this stage is assisted by the effective application of certain features considered by researchers to characterise the antecedents of successful research and include, the intuitive feeling that the proposed research is 'timely' or 'right'; a concern for adequate theoretical understanding both of the background knowledge relating to the research context and the specific theoretical inputs and applications arising from the context itself, together with the application of theory and theory development ; and the 'real world' value in terms of tangible and useful ideas emanating or arising from the research.

The aim here is to present conclusive evidence that a relationship exists between two or more phenomena that is more than pure coincidence, and, more importantly, to ensure that there is a causal link or relationship between the events or variables. In a Popperian sense this entails the use of hypothetico-deductivism – to generate the appropriate hypotheses which emanate from the research question and the theoretical literature under consideration, as it is the hypotheses themselves which attempt to postulate causal links or associations which can subsequently be falsified or verified through statistical data analysis.

Thirdly, the acknowledgement of theory development prior and subsequent to analysis and presentation of results is one of the most important outcomes of 'good' research. It is not, therefore, sufficient for the researcher to confirm that a relationship exists in order to test its validity or otherwise, without providing an explanation of why and how the causal relationship posited in a hypothesis exists, is valid or false. Equally important is the requirement to predict some future outcome. In other words, the theory, which drives the research, should not only explain relationships but should also be predictive. Finally, and

ideally, the research is conducted in order that it can be confirmed or refuted by a community of other social scientists thereby either confirming the Kuhnian 'normal science' paradigm, or, in its refutation (other things being equal) thereby sowing the seeds for the germination of a new paradigm.

Insofar as the Kuhnian concept of the practice of science is concerned, there are several issues to be addressed in relation to the research of this thesis, one of the most important of which is the attempt to separate what is being undertaken from how it is carried out in terms of inductivism and / or deductivism. In this respect, the social context in which the research takes place raises the problem of how knowledge of social phenomena is gained in the first place. It could be argued, for example, that schisms within and between social science and management disciplines suggest the existence of 'parallel normal science paradigms' in which theoretical concepts are accepted or rejected. As May (2001) contends:

*Our disciplines...are characterised not by one single paradigm but by divisions with regard to the aims and methods of social research. These, however, do not simply reflect schisms within the disciplines themselves, but the subject matter with which we are concerned. (p. 37).*

This issue is pertinent in relation to the selection and nature of the concepts applicable to this research. In considering the concept of alienation as an example, it is clear to those familiar with the concept from its Hegelian inception onwards that alienation can be viewed either as 'objective reality', that is, as a condition inherent within capitalist societies and therefore can only be ameliorated with the transition of society from capitalism to socialism, or as a subjective 'feeling state' or attitude which can be



measured and operationalised within an organisational context such as a call centre workplace. Within the research of this thesis, the concept is introduced as estrangement from self within capitalist relations of production, which is capable of being analysed interpretively or hermeneutically, and as a measurable or quantifiable concept along one or more dimensions.

A related issue stemming from the Kuhnian dialectic is that paradigms are not closed systems of thought that are sealed off from each other. Indeed, the dynamics within the social sciences suggests that it is possible and, moreover, desirable, to compare paradigms with one another in order to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of each. Hence, researchers need not confine themselves to one paradigm as Kuhn seems to suggest, but, depending upon the position and value stance of researchers, it becomes feasible to consider other paradigms which, in turn, facilitates an understanding and explanation of empirical enquiries 'while challenging assumptions about social life as an important part of research practice' (May, *op cit.*, p. 37). This requires not only an admixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches, but also a methodological approach that takes on board the interpretation of people's everyday understanding of and meanings given to the research context. In other words, researchers and social theory must take account of subjective meaning, a process that Giddens (1984) refers to as the 'double hermeneutic'. The research of this thesis takes this issue into consideration, mainly but not solely through the use of the unstructured interview. These and other interpretive or hermeneutic aspects of methodology relevant to this thesis are now considered.

## **4.7 The Use Of Hermeneutic Methodology In This Study**

The focus of the interpretive perspective therefore differs from the focus on variables and hypothesis falsification used in the approaches of Popper and within post positivism generally. The goal of interpretive research is to understand the actual production of meanings and concepts used by social actors in real settings. A 'relativist' stance is adopted such that diverse meanings are assumed to exist and to influence how people understand and respond to the 'objective' world. Interpretive research thus describes how different meanings held by different actors such as people and groups produce and sustain a sense of truth, particularly in the face of competing definitions of reality. It also inductively constructs social science concepts of social actors as the foundations for analytic induction. As Gephart (2004) states:

*This concern with meanings and second order concepts – the concepts of the concepts of social actors – leads to a focus on thick descriptions of members' talk and nonverbal actions in specific settings. Rather than producing qualitative facts to evaluate hypotheses, interpretive researchers seek to describe and understand members' meanings and the implications that divergent meanings hold for social interaction. (p. 98).*

### **4.7.1 Hermeneutics: The Basis of Interpretive Method**

The etymology of the term hermeneutics carries an obvious relation to Hermes, the messenger god of the Greeks, and suggests a multiplicity of meanings. In order to deliver the messages of the gods, Hermes had to be conversant in their idiom as well as in that of the 'mortals' for whom the message was destined. He had to understand and interpret for himself what the gods wanted to convey before he could go on to translate, articulate and



clarify their intention to mortals. If Hermes had been alive today, he would have discovered that the tradition he then originated has become intricately developed by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers and social scientists and is now regarded as not only a research methodology in its own right, but also a philosophical enterprise and is characterised by terms such as ‘linguistic competence’, ‘communication’, ‘discourse’, ‘understanding (verstehen)’ and ‘interpretation’, (in this thesis the terms ‘hermeneutics’ and ‘interpretation/interpretivist’ are used interchangeably). Delanty (2000) identifies a number of characteristics or ‘dominant tendencies’ (p. 40) associated with the hermeneutical approach. These are:

*Interpretation*; this is the alternative term for hermeneutics and basically means the subordination of explanation and description to interpretation, which cannot be reduced to mere observation.

*Anti-scientism*; those adopting the hermeneutical approach argue for a strong separation of social and human sciences from the natural sciences in both the method and subject matter of science. Underlying this is a strong claim for the separation of facts and values.

*Value freedom*; as Delanty, (2000) suggests, ‘While being a major departure from positivism, the hermeneutical approach has generally been conceived of as value free and ultimately implies relativism’ (p, 40). In other words, the scientist does not enter into a critique of the subject matter, and in this respect, there is some similarity with positivist social science but with the important stipulation such knowledge gained contributes to an improvement in self-understanding.

*Humanism*; proponents of the interpretivist approach often presuppose the ‘unity of human nature’ which makes interpretation possible. For example, while different cultures, societies and historical eras may have different values attributed to them, there is an underlying human nature that remains constant and hence the belief that the world cannot be meaningless.

#### **4.7.2 Linguistic Constructivism and Intersubjectivity**

Most hermeneutical approaches emphasise the importance of language as the basic structure of society and therefore linguistics is the basis of social life and is meaningfully constituted via ‘communicative interaction’. As Sayer, (2000) argues:

*..until recently, social scientists and methodologists have taken the linguistic character of their own knowledge for granted, as if language were nothing more than a transparent and unproblematic medium. On reflection, it seems extraordinary that methodology should treat the ability to use language effectively as irrelevant to our ability to understand and explain the world. The attention normally given to technical methods of analysis is in gross disproportion to the consideration given to the language in which we characterise the world. Language therefore needs to be put in its place, elevated from its present position of neglect, though not abstracted from its context. (p. 19).*

The context of language (taking language as an example although this can be applied to actions and behaviours, or non-verbal communication) is intersubjective, that is, the act of speaking or writing is within the context of a social relationship. Hence, even most personal feelings or opinions can only be constructed and communicated within intersubjectively understood terms. This is in direct contrast to positivist and other



methodological imperialist approaches that reduce the interpretation of meaning to an opinion, attitude or belief via data gathering (quantitative by inference) and can only make sense of their data 'by already presupposing knowledge of the meanings of the vocabulary in which they (the meanings) are constructed' (Sayer, p. 32).

#### **4.8 Hermeneutic Aspects and Methodologies Employed by the Study**

The main hermeneutic aspects relevant to methodologies employed by this thesis are based upon the 'objective' hermeneutics of Weber (1949), together with its critique, and to a lesser extent, the 'critical hermeneutics' approach of Ricoeur (1976), and others. Weber sought to unify the scientific method by principally combining explanation with understanding (sometimes called interpretive or explanatory understanding, (or *verstehen*). Methodology, and in Weber's case, sociological methodology is concerned only with 'the interpretive (and objective) understanding of subjectively meaningful conduct' (Freund, 1968, p. 95). Weber identifies two types of understanding, the first being rational and empathic understanding, the former residing in the indirect intellectual understanding of a rational activity as for example of a mathematical calculation, while the latter is achieved through empathy and imagination, although there are limits to the degree to which empathy can be considered part of the researcher's brief as 'the more capable we are of sympathetically re-living and understanding such irrational reactions as fear, jealousy or desire for vengeance, the more susceptible we are ourselves to such emotions' (Freund, 1976, p. 97).

The second type of 'verstehen', already alluded to, involves direct and explanatory understanding which concerns the motivations or causes resulting in action. In this

instance, knowledge is not complete until an activity or action is both causally explained and its subjective meaning grasped. As Freund states: 'If the explanation of an activity or social behaviour is limited to causal relationships alone, the sociologist (as researcher) is not satisfied, precisely because a human activity is unintelligible to us unless we understand its meaningful orientation to objects, means and ends' (and is) capable of being verified thereby conferring upon the actions at least some degree of objective validity and rationality' (p.101). Weber thus gave methodological primacy to 'purposive-rational action' with explanation relating goals to motives (Giner, 1972).

Two methodological innovations most readily associated with Weber are, firstly, concerned with the need to eliminate value-judgements from sociological discourse, and secondly, with the method of ideal types, as a means of grasping subjectively held meanings in an objective way. Value freedom, according to Bauman's (1978) evaluation of the concept is indeed the avoidance of value-judgements, but

*...to avoid value-judgements in the works of science does not mean that values are irrelevant to scientific activity...In fact the value abstinence Weber called social science to accept was in his view the only way in which their activity can become and remain relevant to the values of their own times. (p. 73)*

Value-freedom (not to be confused with value orientation) is only appropriate when historically grounded, as limitation of analysis to rational, instrumental statements as 'the only intellectual activity in tune with our time' (Bauman, p. 74) confers upon value freedom a degree of historical relativity while maintaining universal validity. The emphasis upon the 'objective' nature and method of value freedom, or 'ethical neutrality' does not mean that Weber likened the methods of the social sciences to those of the



natural sciences but stressed that the only congruence between the natural and the social sciences is with regard to 'the degree of exactitude and acceptability of its (social science) findings' (*ibid.*, p. 72). In this sense, then, Weber cannot be considered as a positivist as he regarded the subject matter of the social sciences and particularly sociology as subjective, relating to the subjective meanings of actors, while getting to know that subject matter objectively. As Bauman states, 'The task Weber set himself with unprecedented determination was nothing less than an objective science of the subjective' (p. 72).

Finally, the Weberian ideal type as a means of observing the complexities of the social world is worthy of note, if only for the reason that researchers may well construct models which incorporate as many hypothetical characteristics of the context to be observed, as for example, in identifying the nature of commitment and control in call centres. The rationale for constructing ideal types is that a description of the 'reality' of a research context is couched in language which 'is made up of terms which have not been evolved by reflection, which are full of ambiguities, and which can be understood only approximately and without certainty' (Freund, 1968, p, 60). With this in mind, Weber posited a definition of the ideal type:

*An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete and more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasised viewpoints into a unified analytical construct. (from Shils and Finch (1949), p. 90).*

The ideal type is thus the sum total of constructs concerning a research context embodying one or more concepts and is used purely for the purposes of research. In doing so, Weber, as we have already noted, rejects the positivist notion of science as capable of getting to the essence of things in order to unify them within an all-embracing system in order to reflect reality. Weber's view, to the contrary is that no such system is capable of reproducing all reality because of its infinite nature, nor can any concept reproduce (nor should it) the diversity of particular phenomena. Hence the ideal type offers a means of concept construction in order to study 'reality' and single phenomena in all their uniqueness. The nature of ideal-typical analysis has been replicated many times as the consideration of commitment models, for example, attests. It could mean, for instance a model which represents the sum total of common characteristics (a model of commitment) which may be called an 'average type', or it may be a construct in which distinctive or 'typical' elements are stressed. In either case such a construct is 'ideal' in that it is never, or only very rarely, encountered in all its purity in real life. By 'ideal', Weber stresses the term and its construct excludes all value judgements, and has nothing in common with an ideal in the ethical sense as it is not prescriptive or exemplary.

#### **4.9 Critique, Marxism And Critical Theory**

The hermeneutical approach has been characterised by a fundamental opposition to positivism whereby the social sciences are regarded as methodologically distinct and with a separate subject matter from the natural sciences. The dominant hermeneutic tradition, exemplified here by Weber's methodology nevertheless assumes an uncritical view of society and social contexts in that interpretation does not involve a critique but mere understanding. As Delaney (2000) argues:



*Hermeneutics has been conceived more in terms of a dialogue than an interrogation of reality. Science, it is held, cannot offer meaning and is itself a product of a form of life that it cannot transcend. Thus...social science cannot cross cultural boundaries and understand 'alien' cultures for interpretation is always culturally specific. (p. 57).*

#### **4.9.1 Positivism and Hermeneutics**

The main differences between positivism and hermeneutics concerned the problem of the unity of scientific method which deals with causal explanation and empirical observation and so-called 'scientism' which encapsulates the belief that science is the 'most perfect' form of knowledge. In this debate, according to Sayer (2000), the positivistic conception of social science has undoubtedly been ascendant and has been the most influential in the 'institutionalisation of social science' (p. 59), while the hermeneutic idea, although influential, has not had the same impact. Sayer goes on to argue that the two approaches can also be seen as mirroring the conflict between constructivism and realism, with hermeneutics representing an emergent constructivist view of social reality and positivism a realist view.

The emergence of critique as idea and methodology has its origins in the work of Hegel and the Hegelian dialectic and represents a third methodological approach after positivism and hermeneutics. Subsequent critical theory and methodology has been embraced by Marx, the critical theory of the 'Frankfurt School' and by Habermas, amongst others. The approach is, therefore, essentially Marxist, and in contrast to the methodological perspectives considered in this chapter, Marxism is a critical social science, committed to promoting human freedom, or 'emancipation' (Habermas, 1971).

For the purposes of this thesis, the work of Habermas and his contemporaries is of most relevance, but before considering their position, it is necessary to identify the characteristics that typify Marxist social science and methodology.

#### **4.9.2 The Nature Of Marxist Methodology In Relation To The Study**

The first characteristic is that of critique itself. While Marxism can be compatible with positivism and hermeneutics in so far as it uses the methods of explanation and understanding in a critical manner, it differs from positivist and hermeneutic methodologies in that the intention of scientific and other knowledge is not to explain society for its own sake. Rather, knowledge is critical of existing social structures (which are invariably capitalist) and seeks to uncover systems of domination and exploitation. Secondly, as a critical theory of society, a central problem for Marxism is the question of normative foundations. The normative foundations of critique cannot be derived from science but from the political commitment to emancipation. Marxist social science is therefore intended to be an emancipatory practice concerned with social change. A third characteristic of Marxist social science and methodology relates to the dialectic, or 'dialectics' and is, arguably the most contentious topic in Marxist thought (Bottomore, 1988). The dialectical process of Hegel (who emphasised the spiritual as opposed to Marx who emphasised the material) is succinctly described by Bottomore, (1988) thus:

*This is the method which enables the dialectical commentator to observe the process by which categories, notions or forms of consciousness arise out of each other to form even more inclusive totalities, until the system of categories, notions or forms as a whole is completed. (p. 123)*



On the other hand, it is Marx's dialectical materialism which underpins the methodologies of subsequent Marxist approaches to work and society. Labour process theory as described in Chapter 2, is an example of such an approach and as has been demonstrated, it is labour process theory which is germane to the call centre labour process itself. In essence, dialectical materialism is concerned with continuities and contradictions inherent within capitalist society, as Bottomore suggests:

*What...dialectics asserts is that concrete reality (embodying the totality of capitalist society) is not a static substance in undifferentiated unity, but a unity that is differentiated and specifically contradictory, the conflict of opposites driving reality onwards in a historical process of constant progressive change, both evolutionary and revolutionary and in its revolutionary or discontinuous changes bringing forth genuine qualitative novelty. (p. 120-121)*

Unlike hermeneutics and positivism, Marxism does not presuppose the unity of the interpreting subject or the unity of method. Science proceeds dialectically in relation to its object, constituting it and being at the same time constituted by it. Theory and practice are therefore inextricably interlinked. A further characteristic of Marxist methodology is that of 'historicism' and 'determinism', which partly relates to Marx's notion of historical materialism and resides in the contention that the economic structure of society, constituted by its 'relations of production' is the real foundation of society, and is the basis 'on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness' (Marx, 1885, Preface). Following on from this, it is the 'mode of production' which conditions or determines the social, political, intellectual and religious 'superstructure' of society. To be sure, this is a type of economic determinism

embracing the idea that economic forces are, historically, the most important, are the drivers of social change and represent a deterministic philosophy of history.

### **4.9.3 Refinements Of Marxist Methodology**

Although there is some contention as to whether Marxist theory and methodology is truly determinist within the context of the structure / agency debate (Chapter 3), and whether the economic drives the social, political and religious ‘superstructure’ of society in an immutable way (Larrain, 1983), there can be no doubt that his historicism (notwithstanding the objections of those such as Althusser, (1970) ), has influenced both neo-Marxist and non-Marxist methodological dialogue, again with reference to labour process theory and the technological determinism of those such as Blauner, (1964), both considered in Chapter 2 in relation to control and alienation respectively.

The Marxist critique was refined by, amongst others, Adorno, (1976), Horkheimer, (1972), and Marcuse (1977) who collectively became known as the ‘Frankfurt School’, and who, amongst others, constituted the school of thought known as ‘critical theory’, whose most lucid exponent as far as methodology is concerned was Adorno, (1976). In his *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* which is an anti-positivist polemic, Adorno defended critical theory against Popper’s ‘critical rationalism’ and argued that the essence of critical theory is the dialectical method, which aims to grapple with the contradictory nature of society. While Popper argued that reality is free from contradictions (and if they do exist they are the consequences of our epistemological inadequacy), Adorno maintained that contradictions are inherent in reality and cannot be eliminated by increased scientific knowledge and argued that positivism, in confining critique only to methodology and not to what is being investigated is thus an affirmation



of the status quo, and does not attempt to grasp society in its totality. The task of critical theory is to use dialectical methodology in order to juxtapose 'unjust' society with the conception of a 'just' society through criticism and awareness of contradiction (the counter-factual norm). In order to do this, analysis cannot be confined to discrete or 'atomistic' facts, as everything that is investigated, 'the subjective no less than the objective relations are mediated through society' (Adorno, 1976, p. 84). All empirical research must therefore be integrated into a critical theoretical framework.

With its focus upon the 'just' society arising out of a critique of the 'unjust', there is an acceptance within critical theory that, with the disillusionment of the Marxist project and the adaptations of and to an 'advanced' capitalist society, the working class can no longer be seen as the revolutionary subject, and 'with the rise of the 'totally administered society' and the commodification of culture, emancipation cannot come from labour; hence the need for ideological critique and cultural criticism' (Delanty, 2000, p. 75). It is doubtful whether the critical theory of the Frankfurt School contributed anything additional to the basic Marxist analysis of society in terms of methodology apart from shaping conceptions of social science as critical practice.

Adorno's critique of positivism or 'critical rationalism' was developed by Habermas (1976) who criticises Popper and argues that in social science, the scientist cannot be normatively separated from the object of research in the way Popper believes. Accepting that, in line with Popper's argument, theory is not the result of the 'presuppositionless' observation of facts and that science proceeds from theoretical problems to observation, and that theories involve provisional consensus within the scientific community, Habermas nevertheless claims that the normative content in consensus building cannot

come solely from scientific discourse itself, but must stem from the logic of communication. In excluding social content from the scientific community, Habermas (1976), argues that Popper resorts to 'scientific decisionism' (p. 151) and states that 'Research is an institution composed of people who act together and communicate with one another; as such it determines, through the communication of the researches that which can theoretically lay claim to validity'. The idea that knowledge is guided by social interests is fundamental to Habermas's conception of social science. Popper, Habermas argues, can ignore the social interests underlying the constitution of knowledge only by recourse to the ideology of value freedom. In pursuing this line of argument, Habermas contends that social science has a dialectical relationship to its object and that the development of dialectical method necessitates going beyond dialectical materialism in order to embrace hermeneutics while rejecting, or at least criticising its inherent conservatism. As Delanty (2000) states: 'His (Habermas's) aim is to rescue what is valuable from this tradition in order to build a critical hermeneutical theory of social science' (p. 82) ..(and) 'linking knowledge with its social interests on the one side, and, on the other, subjecting knowledge to self-reflection and critique' (p. 84). For Habermas (1978), there are three types of knowledge or 'cognitive' interests central to his conception of social science methodology and these are related to the three sciences of the natural, human and social and his view of methodology is encapsulated in the following statement:

*The approach of the empirical-analytical sciences incorporates a technical cognitive interest; that of the historical-hermeneutical sciences incorporates a practical one; and the approach of critically oriented sciences incorporates the emancipatory*



*cognitive interest...the importance of interests with respect to science is that they determine the social context of science. If science is based on interests, then scientism is untenable...The interests of underlying scientific knowledge are linked to specific dimensions of social action. Knowledge-constitutive interests take form in the medium of work, language and power...The interest in prediction and control is related to the world of work and is called instrumental action. Hermeneutical knowledge aimed at understanding is linked to communicative interaction or language. Critical emancipatory knowledge is linked to the experience of power. (p.p. 308-313).*

Habermas's approach to methodology which, together with the contribution of Apel (1980), culminated in a model of a critical hermeneutical social science which combined the challenges to, and critique of, positivism, and the Marxist tradition of critical theory. However, Habermas, within this model argues for the separation of 'nature' and natural science which is seen as 'objective', external to human society and based upon a technical cognitive interest, and social science which in his opinion is based on an emancipatory cognitive interest. The essence of the critique of Habermasian methodology is the alleged failure to resolve the problem of the place of nature in his philosophy and methodology of the social sciences and to regard natural science as immovable (if not immutable), objective and value-free. However, as Delanty (2000) and others maintain, natural science is a movable feast and it is the developments within natural science itself that have, arguably had a greater impact in challenging positivism than that of critiques emanating from within the social sciences, as Delanty goes on to argue:

*The critical hermeneutical view of science has been undermined by developments within natural science itself that suggest that nature is not an unchanging entity*

*existing objectively outside society and confronting science as something to be mastered....Positivism has in fact been more undermined by natural science itself than by the successive waves of attack social scientists have launched against it in the name of critique, hermeneutics, deconstructionism and the various mantras of emancipationists.(p.87)*

Indeed, it has been argued that positivism is not only a false depiction of social science methodology, but also is becoming an anachronism in the natural sciences (Bernstein, 1979; Keat, 1981). Notwithstanding the foregoing critique, the study utilises some aspects of the methodologies inherent within hermeneutics and dialectics, and also borrows ideas from the methodology associated with critical realism.

#### **4.10 Critical realism as methodology**

Realism has a long tradition within the social sciences (Manicas, 1987). However while traditional realism has attracted considerable criticism, more recent approaches to, and perspectives brought to bear upon, realism have attempted, with some degree of success, to forge a consistent methodology. A justification for the use of realist methodology is that 'it can provide a model of scientific explanation which avoids both positivism and relativism' (Robson, 2002, p. 29) and that it is an attractive choice for those doing social research and who wish to demonstrate that what they are doing is scientific. Its advocates claim that the realist methodology is scientific in that it is congruent with current influential approaches to the philosophy of science; that it also has the potential of incorporating features highlighted by emancipatory approaches such as those of some



aspects of hermeneutics and critical theory; and that it can assist in the promotion of social justice (House, 1991; Bhaskar, 1986; Corson, 1991).

Realism thus attempts to integrate three methodologies (Delanty, 2000, p. 129-131). In the first instance, 'realism defends the possibility of causal explanation', and this is the main characteristic of realism. Secondly, 'it accepts the hermeneutical notion of social reality as being communicatively constructed, without drawing constructivist conclusions. The problem with the hermeneutical approach is that it does not address causal mechanisms and accepts the construction of social actors. Thirdly, most varieties of realism, although not necessarily all, involve a critical dimension.

The basis of mainstream realist methodological approaches is the fundamental premise that, given an independent external social reality, or 'objectified social structure' (Reed, 2001, p. 214) explanation is constructed in terms of 'mechanisms'. These mechanisms, which are relatively enduring both underlie and generate instabilities, uncertainties and flux inherent within everyday events and wider social processes, and may be termed 'underlying mechanisms, and / or 'generative mechanisms'. Realist explanation performs two related functions which are 'to explain the causal properties of each entity in terms of its internal structure and to explain the occurrence of particular events in terms of conjunctions of the causal properties of various interacting mechanisms' (Porpora, 1998, p. 344, as cited in Reed, 2001). Social actors, whether these comprise individuals, groups or other entities operate within the material circumstances of 'certain structured interests, resources, powers, constraints and predicaments that are built into each position by the web of relationships' (*op cit.*, p. 344), and may well respond to their structural contexts and material conditions 'in creative ways which will, usually inadvertently, generate

varying degrees of innovation and change in existing organisational forms and their future development' (Reed, 2001, p. 215).

Critical realist methodology, therefore, utilises the structuration debate instigated by Giddens (1984) concerning the interplay between 'structure' and 'agency' as discussed in Chapter 3 whereby human agents are seen as positioned within, and constrained or even empowered by, many competing and often contradictory social structures which place inconsistent and incoherent demands upon them. In this respect, Ackroyd, (2004), notes that institutions and other large collective organisations symbolise power relationships which 'ensures the perpetuation of existing patterns of advantage and disadvantage' (p. 147). Realist analysis and explanation entails critique insofar as 'it enhances our knowledge of the constraints and limitations imposed on social actors by extant social structures and extends the potential space and resources available for human choice and intervention' (Archer *et al.*, 1998, p. 383), and also invites the possibility of extending the impact of agency upon structure by identifying structural factors which presently constrain and limit the behaviour of social actors.

Through this process, as Reed points out, there unfolds the theoretical possibility of facilitating 'less restrictive institutional and organisational forms' (Reed, *op cit.*, p. 215). Reed invokes the concept of what he calls 'positioned practices' which 'designate the points of contact or entry between human agency and social structure insofar as they establish the mediating systems of places, roles, rules and activities that configure the networks of social relations into which individuals are slotted' (*ibid.*, p. 215). 'Positioned practices' therefore provide the crucial link between structure and agency' by establishing a mediating system of tasks, activities and relations through which material



conditions and individual actors are brought together in sustainable institutional forms' (p. 215),

#### **4.10.1 Summary Implications of Critical Realist Methodology for the Research of this Thesis**

As part of a multi-methodological approach, elements of critical realist methodology are utilised in relation to aspects of the qualitative dimension of the research but not the quantitative unless there are hypothetical associations (or disassociations) which cannot be explained by any other means. For example, if there is an unexpected disassociation between an independent and dependent variable, then either, it may be explained by, and be attributed to, the peculiarities of the context or, an alternative explanatory (often theoretical) account for what is happening must be sought (Ackroyd, 2004). A rationale for applying elements of critical realist methodology is that within structural contexts such as the call centre workplace, the realist view accounts for the sense workers have of being constrained or enabled by their circumstances in terms of the structures in which they are located; these structures are both organisational and relationship oriented and embody patterns of countervailance and resistance effected both by horizontally oppositional groups and by relationships of domination and subordination. Within the call centre workplace, critical realist methodologies may attempt to uncover the actual behaviours of people at work together with a consideration of the way work is experienced and understood by them. In addition attempts may be made to explore the extent to which individuals and groups may make an impact upon what occurs within the call centre. A concrete example of this is that of Delbridge's (2004) research into factories in South Wales which demonstrates that despite the formalised attempts by

management to maintain generative control mechanisms within 'high performance/high commitment' regimes, informal relationships amongst workers and teams are extensively developed and actually inhibit management in their attempts to mobilise team sentiment as a way of enforcing and reinforcing discipline. In similar vein, the call centre workplace is an exemplar of tight management control, high technological surveillance and regimented, routinised working practices. Nevertheless, taking a critical realist stance, the development of informal 'group solidarity' and 'resistance' in the form of humour, subversive or otherwise, is not only possible (despite and probably because of the generative mechanisms and positioned practices of control, market and organisational imperatives) but inevitable.

It is, however, often within comparative case study contexts or what Taylor and Bain (2004) call 'contrastive' approaches that a critical realist perspective becomes a more valid proposition as a research methodology. The comparison and contrasting of two or more call centres which have similar management control and technological surveillance structures and are, therefore, in many respects similar in their formal characteristics may, nevertheless, reveal disparities, both subtle and substantial, in the informal behaviours of groups and teams which may, in time, impact upon those structures. However, due to practical constraints of time and space governing this thesis, the qualitative and quantitative results from respondents from four call centres are aggregated and viewed as a totality, and this may indeed devalue but not necessarily delimit, the contribution of a critical realist methodological approach.



#### **4.11 Summary**

In summary, this chapter has provided the rationale for the methodological orientation used in this research. The focus of the investigation is the call centre work environment and the postulated association between the four main conceptual constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction. The methodological choice appropriate to this investigation is one in which mixed methods which combine inductive and deductive approaches is used. The research for this thesis therefore adopts both positivist and interpretive methods, including elements of critical realism, in recognition of the unresolved theoretical debate that appears to place both positivism and interpretivism into two diametrically opposed camps. This 'multi-methodological' orientation, it is argued, is highly appropriate to the admixture of call centre workplaces as research contexts, to the social processes that occur within them, to the meanings that employees give to their work and to structures of work and organisation, and to the research questions themselves. In this chapter, the underlying philosophical assumptions pertaining to positivist, interpretive, Marxist and critical realist methodologies were evaluated in relation to this research. The next chapter describes and details the research methods appropriate to the multi-methodological approach adopted by this investigation.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Methods**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The stated aims of the primary research, framed as research questions are:

1. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?
2. What is the nature of the association between the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?

The research questions are derived from the exploratory phases of the research and have informed the main confirmatory research. The research questions are intended to satisfy certain criteria which embrace and facilitate the discussion of the relevant literature and generation of hypotheses (Chapters 2 and 3), the adoption of appropriate methodologies (Chapter 4), the selection of the research contexts, the sampling and representativeness of the sample, data gathering and management (Chapter 5) and the presentation of the results and discussion of them (Chapters 6 and 7).



The aim of this chapter is to specify the detail of the chosen research design and the main methods employed from inception to completion of the empirical research. This chapter builds upon the philosophical foundations of Chapter 3 and describes the research design and procedures used during the various phases of the research.

Research design issues of sampling, instrument development, validity and reliability of constructs and scales and ethical considerations are explained and justified.

## **5.2 Overview of Research Design Stages**

Table 5.1 identifies and describes the main stages of the research. Both the heuristic and exploratory research comprises two phases embracing stage 1 (heuristic) and stage 2 (exploratory). The main research for this thesis comprises the third phase, stages 2-5. The genesis of the project, dating from 2000 onwards, was stimulated by an interest in the development of the call centre as a unique workplace and being a progressively significant source of employment in the UK, Europe, North America, and, more recently, in the Far East. Initially, the research objective or 'idea' was articulated in fairly general terms: 'What is it like to work in a call centre?' and was subsequently refined for the purposes of phase 3 research into the overall objective: 'To contribute to knowledge and understanding of the nature of the relationship between control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre context'

Exploratory research took place in two separate call centres, phase 1 commencing in 2000, and phase 2 commencing in 2002. The primary research for this thesis, comprising phase 3, commenced in 2003 and was conducted within four call centre workplaces on Merseyside over a period of several months during 2005/2006 using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods comprising interviews,



observation and questionnaire. The sample was aggregated, and, no statistical comparison of the sub-samples of each of the four call centres was made. Data collection and analysis took place in 2006-7 and the presentation of results and discussion was completed during 2008-9.

**Table 5.1 Stages of the Research**

Heristic and Exploratory Research: Phases 1 and 2	Primary Research: Phase 3			
Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Literature reviews	Literature review and analysis for main research, phase 3	Ongoing literature review and review of methodology and methods	Literature review updated and refined	Incorporation of extant literature into discussion and conclusion
Initial research objectives modified after phase 1 to inform phase 2	Generate hypotheses derived from research questions and literature review and guided by initial research question and exploratory research	Start data analysis using appropriate methods	Continue data analysis of questionnaires and interviews, hypothesis validation and falsification; use of appropriate methodological approaches to facilitate discussion	Conclusions
Access to data sources and research contexts for phases 1 and 2	Access organisations; four call centre research contexts	Data collection from research contexts completed	Findings and discussion of findings / results	
Data collection, analysis and management	Select strategy and methods. Develop analysis tools, interview schedules and questionnaire using appropriate scales for distribution	Interview programme completed		
Output in form of journal articles and conference papers	Begin chapter drafts: ch 2 and 3, literature review; ch. 4, methodology; ch. 5, methods	Continue chapter drafts, ch. 6, presentation of results	Continue chapter drafts, ch. 7, discussion of results	Final thesis

The research activities for the primary research are presented in more detail than those for the exploratory research. The main reason for this is that the phase 1, the heuristic, and to a lesser extent, phase 2, the exploratory research, are limited in scope, instrument development and size of population and samples. The criteria for the three phases of the research process are detailed in Table 5.2.



**Table 5.2 Research Criteria**

<b>Overall Objective</b>				
<i>To contribute to knowledge and understanding of the nature of the relationship between control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre context</i>				
<b>Research Phases and Associated Objectives</b>	<b>Sample Size and Response Rate</b>	<b>Conceptual issues</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>1. Heuristic</b>  Gauging perceptions of work; commitment to organisation and union. Establish construct relevance.	Sample size: 300  Response rate : 83% (250 returned)  20 interviews	Commitment  Satisfaction	Qualitative (interview)  Quantitative (questionnaire)	Low organisational commitment; Moderate union commitment. Low to moderate satisfaction
<b>2. Exploratory</b>  Satisfaction, commitment and control relations. Construct development, measurement, and validation.	Sample size: 204  Response rate : 85% (173 returned)  25 interviews	Commitment  Satisfaction  Control	Qualitative (interview)  Quantitative (questionnaire)	Moderate to low commitment and satisfaction.  High control relations
<b>3. Primary Thesis Research Questions</b>	<b>Money Back</b> Sample size: 122 Response rate: 69.7% (85 returned) 12 Interviewees	Control  Alienation	Qualitative (interview)  Quantitative (questionnaire)	Results and Discussion, Chapters. 6 and 7.  All hypotheses supported
1. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the concepts and constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?	<b>Regal</b> Sample size: 82 Response rate: 79.2% (65 returned) 12 Interviewees	Commitment  Satisfaction		
2. What is the nature of the association between the concepts and constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?	<b>Media Co.</b> Sample size: 521 Response rate: 68.5% (357 returned) 12 Interviewees			
	<b>Vortexia</b> Sample size: 647 Response rate: 55.7% (361 returned) 12 Interviewees			

### 5.3. The Heuristic Research: Phase 1

The initial phase 1 research was undertaken at the Liverpool call centre of 'Barclays Direct Loans Services' (BDLS) during the period January – April 2000, where approximately 500 CSRs were employed in order to promote and arrange personal loan facilities or to deal with the collection of outstanding loan and credit card debts



of defaulting customers. The main aim of this research is to gauge perceptions of work and attitudes to commitment to both organisation and union

### **5.3.1 Research Objectives**

The specific research objectives are:

1. To gain insight into how CSRs perceive their work
2. To explore the nature of CSRs' commitment to their organisation
3. To determine the nature of CSRs' commitment to their trade union?

No firm hypotheses were generated from the literature survey.

### **5.3.2 Instrument Development, Operationalisation of Constructs, Implementation and Nature of the Sample**

The survey instruments consisted of a questionnaire survey and a short interview schedule developed from the research objectives and is described in Appendix 2. Both compound and categorical variables were included in the questionnaire. The constructs comprised work-related issues, commitment to organisation and commitment to trade union. Each construct consisted of a number of items relevant to that construct. The work-related issues construct was described by items such as job characteristics and tasks, pressure-related factors such as keeping to targets and scripts, breaks and computer monitoring. Commitment to organisation was measured by items such as loyalty, sharing the values of the organisation and involving and communicating with employees. Commitment to the trade union was described by the nature of workplace representation, contact with union representatives and satisfaction with the performance of the trade union. The interview schedule, described in



Appendix 3, contains nine questions which sought to elicit more detailed responses in relation to each construct.

The sample for the questionnaire survey comprised three hundred CSRs to reflect gender composition, age distribution and nature of the employment contract. The interview sample of ten consisted of six CSRs, two team leaders and two call centre managers.

### **5.3.3 Data Capture and Management, Analysis Procedures, Reliability and Validity**

The survey instruments were used to obtain CSRs' views of the issues concerning their work and commitment levels and how widely held these views were. The 250 questionnaire responses received were subject to a simple quantitative analysis. No statistical tests were undertaken and statistical packages such as SPSS were not used. Recording, processing, combining, reduction, data analysis and reporting of data were carried out manually. No tests for reliability and validity of constructs were performed. The findings provided the impetus for a more structured approach to further research in the area. The output from this research comprises one paper (Rose, 2002).

### **5.4 The Exploratory Research: Phase 2**

Phase 2 is in the nature of a pilot survey and builds upon the phase 1 research by clarifying and elaborating upon the main conclusions of phase 1 concerning control, commitment and satisfaction. The aim of the phase 2 pilot study is to confirm the main conceptual issues and constructs in preparation for a more robust study in phase 3. The fieldwork for the research during phase 2 was undertaken during the period March – September 2002 within a call centre of a large insurance company

comprising both part time and full time employees. The call centre is located in an urban area in the North West of England which experiences relatively high levels of unemployment where local labour market conditions are generally favourable to employers. As the area attracts large numbers of call centres, both in-house and outsourced, it is fairly easy to obtain such work.

Many call centres experience recruitment problems due to high turnover rates, but the area as whole has least problems with turnover than most of the UK. The main insurance sales product is motor insurance and motor insurance claims with customer service and sales representatives (CSRs) responding to inward and making outward (sales) bound calls. Prior to 2002, claims and sales were separate departments with CSRs specializing in each, but since June 2000, the departments merged and CSRs were encouraged to become 'multi-skilled' although many, around 55 per cent, remained 'single skilled'.

During the time the research was undertaken, there were twenty-four teams comprising around eight CSRs and a team leader. The desks are arranged in such a way as to suit the team members, and the team groupings are partially compartmentalized to afford a modicum of privacy. Each team has a 'sales board' where members' targets and 'scores' are displayed and where information on how best to achieve targets is provided. The call centre architecture incorporates a sophisticated 'integrated' performance management apparatus which includes defined standards, target setting, detailed training, and regular monitoring and performance feedback.



### **5.4.1 Research Objectives**

The research objectives were refined from the previous phase 1 study and are:

1. To what extent are CSRs satisfied with their work within a controlled environment?
2. What is the nature of CSR commitment within the call centre workplace?

The following hypotheses concerning satisfaction were generated from an ongoing literature review and the results of the phase 1 study.

1. That CSR control over work operations is associated with satisfaction;
2. That work-based characteristics, supervisory control and support are features of the call centre environment that contribute to satisfaction;
3. That HR practices and interventions (training, appraisal, information and communication) are associated with satisfaction;
4. That monitoring, technological and emotional control and pressure and labour (scripting, acting, time, targets) are associated with satisfaction; and
5. That extrinsics such as pay, job security, promotion prospects and work-life balance are linked to satisfaction.

The hypotheses concerning commitment, derived from the commitment and control literature are:

1. That there is a positive association between work and organisational commitment amongst CSRs;
2. That work and job-related factors comprising work commitment (satisfaction, intensity of job demands, job influence, etc) are features of the call centre environment that contribute to overall CSR employee commitment; and
3. That employee perceptions of high commitment practices (HCPs) are only tentatively associated with employee commitment.

#### **5.4.2 Instrument Development, Operationalisation of Constructs, Implementation and Nature of the Sample**

In common with phase 1 of the research, the survey instruments consisted of a questionnaire and a short interview schedule developed from the research questions.

Both compound and categorical variables were included in the questionnaire as described in Appendix 4. The interview schedule is described in Appendix 5.

The research expanded some of the themes addressed in the initial phase study and analysed the constructs of work satisfaction, control and employee commitment.

Items relating to commitment to trade unionism were included in the questionnaire but the responses were not analysed, owing to the very small proportion of employees, (around 15 per cent), who claimed that they were union members.

The constructs of satisfaction, control and commitment were composed of items relevant to that construct.



### *Instrument Development and Operationalisation of Constructs*

The main survey instrument was a self-completed questionnaire about the nature of the job and job characteristics, job control, managerial and technical control, emotional pressure and labour and work and organisational commitment.

With regard to the first research question dealing with satisfaction and control and informed by the literature review, elements of the questionnaire are based upon scales derived from the employee questionnaire used by the WERS 98 researchers (Millward *et al*, 2000), the labour process call centre research of Bain and Taylor (2000) and some aspects of the Warr (1992) satisfaction scale. The items used to measure the constructs were derived from the existing sources referred to above (Millward *et al* 2000, Bain and Taylor, 2000, Warr, 1992). The construct satisfaction was measured with four items concerning influence over the job, pay, sense of achievement and respect from supervisor (see also Feinberg, Kim, Hokama, de Ruyter and Keen, 2000). Control was addressed with items concerning both intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the construct (Taylor and Bain, 1999, Callaghan and Thompson, 2001) and also with items representing the employment relationship relating to involvement and consultation, together with identification with, and loyalty to, the organisation. (Millward *et al*, 2000, Gaillie *et al*, 1998).

The second research question focused upon employee commitment. For this, the survey method assesses commitment, both quantitatively and qualitatively, against five relationship categories which are, to an extent, mutually inclusive and which span the 'whole work experience' of call centre workers. Of these categories, 'intra-team-co-worker', 'customer relationships' together with company specific 'high commitment' human resource practices were explored primarily by interview while

the remaining categories were subject to pre-programmed questionnaire items, apart from three open-ended questions concerning job characteristics.

Work commitment, identified as a separate construct, is concerned with questionnaire items relating to work activities and tasks, while organisational commitment is mainly concerned with the 'affective' dimension relating to loyalty and other associated items (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Work and job-related factors are considered to be antecedents of work commitment in the first instance and human resource/high commitment practices (HCPs) are concerned with questionnaire items describing information, communication and consultation.

The research design also included 22 exploratory interviews. The interviews were used to complement the literature review and to inform the research questions and hypotheses. These interviews, representing over 30 hours of discussion, were tape-recorded and examined using content analysis, and the identified themes were incorporated into the survey questionnaire.

### *Implementation and Nature of the Sample*

Interviews were conducted during March 2002 and the self-completed questionnaire was distributed to the whole population of 204 CSRs and team leaders in August 2002.

The sample population was a census sample of all CSRs working in the call centre. A total of 173 responses were received from the population of 204 CSRs (including team leaders) to whom questionnaires were distributed, which yielded a response rate of 84.8 %. The interview sample of 22 comprised 16 CSRs, 3 team leaders, 2 shift leaders and the centre manager.



### **5.4.3 Data Capture and Management, Analysis Procedures, Reliability and Validity**

The analysis procedure for this phase of the research was of an exploratory nature and assesses the latent themes in items derived from the initial qualitative work which indicated that call centres comprise a distinct working environment in which control is a significant and complex issue and one that may need an adapted framework to explain satisfaction in context. In addition, exploratory factor analysis was adopted and considered appropriate as the study contained new items not previously validated. 35 variables were used in this analysis that appeared to be linked to evaluation of satisfaction at work and which represent a distillation of the relevant items included in the questionnaire (Appendix 3). The data set met the recommended sample-to-variable ratio of 5:1 to maximize the potential generalisability of the results (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The critical assumptions underlying factor analysis were tested using the Bartlett test of sphericity and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy. The 35 independent variables were analysed using Principal Components Analysis as the extraction method and Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization. All factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted, and a cut-off loading of 0.45 was used to screen out variables that were weak indicators of the constructs. All variables loaded satisfactorily onto the latent factors. The factor analysis was also examined to ensure acceptable levels of variable communality and multicollinearity. Multiple regression was then used with the eight composite independent variables, expressed as factor scores calculated from the item responses and regressed against the dependent variable of job satisfaction.

Organisational commitment was addressed with items concerning identification with, and loyalty to, the organisation and measured through the inclusion of elements of the

Meyer and Allen scale, (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Work commitment, a dependent variable, was measured with four main items concerning influence over the job, pay, sense of achievement and respect from supervisor (Feinberg, Kim, Hokama, de Ruyter and Keen, 2000).

Thirteen variables were used in this analysis that appeared to be linked to commitment. The data set met the recommended sample-to-variable ratio of 5:1 to maximize the potential generalisability of the results (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The critical assumptions underlying factor analysis were tested using the Bartlett test of sphericity and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy. The KMO measure was .777 and Bartlett's test was significant. The 13 variables were analysed by exploratory factor analysis, again using Principal Components Analysis as the extraction method and Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization. Five factors, two of which fell marginally short (.981 and .955) of the normal inclusion criteria of an eigenvalue of 1.0. A cut-off loading of 0.45 was used to screen out variables that were weak indicators of the constructs. All variables loaded satisfactorily onto the latent factors. The factor analysis was also examined to ensure acceptable levels of variable communality (range: .523-.956) and multicollinearity from the correlation matrix, which indicated a *prima facie* case for assuming a relationship between the variables. Composite variable scores were arrived at for individual respondents for each factor and for overall work commitment by calculating the mean of the component items. By recoding these mean scores into five Likert-scale categories that parallel the original scoring of the variables, an analysis of the distribution of these composite scores could be presented. The limitation of this averaging relative to the regression scores calculated in the factor analysis which incorporate the additional sophistication of weighting individual items is acknowledged.



Multiple regression was then used with items comprising four independent factors that represented work commitment regressed against the composite dependent variable of organisational commitment. A second-order regression analysis was then used to develop the explanatory model further. In this analysis satisfaction with pay was included as an explanatory variable in satisfaction, even though it had emerged as a component of this construct in the factor analysis.

The output from this research comprises two papers to American Academy of Management conference, (Rose and Wright, 2004; Rose, Wright and Taylor 2005), and one published paper, (Rose and Wright, 2005)

## 5.5 The Primary Research Contexts and Analysis Procedures

The primary research during phase 3 was conducted within four call centres on Merseyside. Each call centre was investigated separately over two years during the period 2003-2005. Three call centres were ‘in house’ and one call centre was outsourced. The details of the call centres, nature of the samples and response rates are described in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3 Population Size and Response Rates**

Call centre	Population size equating with sample (CSRs)	Number of respondents	Response rate (%)
Money Back	122	85	69.7
Regal	82	65	79.2
Media Co.	521	357	68.5
Vortexica	647	361	55.7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1372</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>68.2</b>



**'Money Back'** is a national debt collecting agency which deals with incoming and outgoing calls. CSRs in this in-house call centre contact a whole range of debtors and also respond to debtor calls. **'Regal'** is part of a large insurance company which deals with all aspects of insurance for disabled customers. Both **'Money Back'** and **'Regal'** are smaller in-house call centres. **'Media Company'** is a large in-house call centre which provides media services via the cable network. CSRs provide both service support for customers and sales across a range of media products including cable television, internet broadband services and telephone services. **Vortexia** is an outsourcing organisation which has two main sites on Merseyside. The site in which the research took place provides outsourcing services for six organisations.

### **5.5.1 The Research Questions**

The primary research addresses the research questions described in the introduction of this chapter. The research questions were developed from the ongoing literature review and phase 2 of the exploratory research. The research questions are re-stated here:

- 1. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?**
- 2. What is the nature of the association between the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?**

The hypotheses, derived from the literature review and based on the research questions are described in Chapters 2 and 3 and are re-stated here.



### **Hypothesis 1**

That customer/CSR interaction, loyalty to employer, satisfaction with team leader and human resource practices are positively associated with commitment.

### **Hypothesis 2**

That satisfaction is positively associated with commitment.

### **Hypothesis 3**

That intention to quit is negatively associated with commitment.

### **Hypothesis 4**

That alienation and satisfaction are negatively associated with each other.

### **Hypothesis 5**

That management and technological control is positively associated with alienation.

### **Hypothesis 6**

That loyalty to organisation is negatively associated with alienation.

### **Hypothesis 7**

That management and technological control is negatively associated with satisfaction.

### **Hypothesis 8**

That team leader satisfaction, intra team relations, intrinsics, extrinsics, involvement, customer/CSR interaction, CSR control over work are positively associated with satisfaction.

### **Hypothesis 9**

That alienation is negatively associated with commitment.

## **Hypothesis 10**

That human resource practices are positively associated with commitment.

### **5.5.2 Instrument Development and Operationalisation of Constructs**

Each of the four main constructs (control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction) described in the research questions were analysed in the literature review (Chapters 2 and 3), described in the review of results (Chapter 6) and evaluated in the discussion (Chapter 7). The questionnaire, described in Appendix 6, is designed to measure the items which comprise each construct. The questionnaire is the main survey instrument used to collect data, and has been developed from phase 2 of the exploratory research.

The questionnaires were distributed to the whole CSR population within each of the four call centres during 2005-2006. The distribution process for the two largest call centres took several months to complete. This was due mainly to the intricacies of the shift work patterns within each of the call centres. In the case of Vortexia, the researcher experienced considerable delay owing to the nature of the outsourced operations. An additional factor which delayed the analysis of the questionnaire was the sporadic and incremental return of completed questionnaires. Details of population size, the respondent totals and the response rates for each of the call centres are provided in Table 5.3.

The questionnaire comprises 171 items which make up the compound variables or constructs. These are examined in some detail. The categorical variables are identified in Table 5.4.



**Table 5.4 The Categorical Variables Extracted From The Questionnaire**

<b>F: About Yourself</b>		Less than 6 months	less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11+ years
How many years in total have you been working in this call / contact centre?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How long have you been working in call centres altogether, including this one?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you working full time <input type="checkbox"/> part-time <input type="checkbox"/>	Are you: female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/>						
Are you working here: temporarily <input type="checkbox"/> permanently <input type="checkbox"/>	How old are you: 18-22 <input type="checkbox"/> 23-27 <input type="checkbox"/> 28-35 <input type="checkbox"/>						
Have you previously worked in other call centres? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	36-45 <input type="checkbox"/> over 45 <input type="checkbox"/>						
Are you an agency employee? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Are you a member of a trade union? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>						
Do you deal with sales <input type="checkbox"/> service <input type="checkbox"/> technical help <input type="checkbox"/>	Are you a member of a staff association? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>						
Sales and service <input type="checkbox"/> general stuff <input type="checkbox"/>							
How many days have you been absent from work during the past 12 months?							
1-2 days <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 5 days <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 10 days <input type="checkbox"/> Over 10 days <input type="checkbox"/>							

The compound variables comprise questions or items which are measured on a 5 point Likert type scale. A few questions are re-phrased in order to ensure accuracy of response. In addition, many items are both positively and negatively phrased. As constructs tend to overlap, some questions may be applicable to more than one construct as, for example within question B1, where commitment may be considered both positively (high commitment) and negatively (alienative commitment). In this respect, ‘conceptual overlap’ is not considered a problem for this research. The constructs of commitment and alienation are operationalised using elements of established scales, while control and satisfaction are operationalised by reference to extant models and other constructs used in empirical research in each of these areas. As indicated earlier, the four main constructs are used selectively in order to address



the stated purpose of the research and the research questions. Each construct is considered in turn. It should be noted that, for purposes of illustration, not all of the items for each construct are included. Tables 6.4 - 6.52 in Chapter 7 contain these items. Table 5.13 provides the total number of items for each construct.

### *The Control Construct*

The control concept, as addressed in Chapter 2, is concerned with managerial control exerted over the CSR and the CSR's work, technological control which facilitates surveillance of the CSR and his/her work operations and CSR control over his/her work and which are considered to be antecedents of both satisfaction and alienation. Hypotheses 5 and 8 incorporate these dimensions of control. Questionnaire items which operationalise CSR control over work operations comprise: A1 (2); A2 (1-4); A3 (1-3); and A10 (2-3). Managerial and technological control items comprise A1 (3, 4, 9); A5 (1-5, 7-13). Question A5 deals with perceived pressure upon the CSR and is reproduced below (Table 5.5)

**Table 5.5 Managerial and Technical Control**

<b><i>A5: The pressures of your job</i></b>					
How much do these factors add to your job pressure?	A great deal	To some extent	Not much	Not at all	Does not apply
1. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Having calls taped	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Repetitiveness of call made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Not enough time between calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Having to keep to a script	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Difficult customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Pressure from my supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Too few breaks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Breaks too short	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Computer monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Not enough time to talk to colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Monotony of the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Always having to 'put on an act' when on the telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



In addition to the operationalisation of the principal concepts into variables, the control model identifies a number of control characteristics which are incorporated as questions and items ( Chapter 2, section 2.5.5, Figure 2.1). There are a number of items which link with the satisfaction, alienation and commitment constructs. These are: managerial and technical control, A1 (3, 4, 9); A5 (1-5, 7-13) and CSR control, A1 (2); A2 (1-4); A3 (1-3); A10 (2-3). Associated with alienation; quality of CSR interaction, A4 (9); A5 (6); E1 (1-10), associated with alienation and commitment; loyalty and intention to quit, A4 (7); B1 (1-20); B2 (6); C1 (3-4); C2 (1-10); D1 (2); D2 (1); E1 (2), human resource practices (HCPs), A6 (1-5); A7 (1-5); A8, (1-5); A9 (1-5); A10 (1-4, 6-14); A11 (1-7); C2 (1-10); D1 (1-12); D2 (1-11); E1 (1-2, 4, 7, 10). as antecedents of commitment; satisfaction with leader, A2 (5); A4 (7); A5 (7); C2 (1-10); D1 (10); D2 (1-11), associated with commitment and satisfaction; extrinsics, A1 (4-5, 9-10); A2 (6); A4 (2, 4, 5-8); A5 (7); B3 (1-5); B4 (1-2, 6, 9, 10); D1 (5); D2 (1, 6, 8), intrinsics, A1 (6); A2 (1-5, 7); A3 (1-3); A4 (3); A10 (3, 6-9); E1 (2), involvement and consultation, (A6 (1-4); A7 (1-5); A8 (1-5); A9 (1-5); C2 (5-6, 7); D2 (7, 9, 11), team relations, A2 (7); A4 (1); A5 (10); D1 (1-12), managerial and technical control, (as above), CSR control, (as above), associated with satisfaction.

### *The Alienation Construct*

For the purposes of the primary investigation, the construct of alienation is relatively narrowly focused, and as discussed in Chapter 2, it was necessary to provide a comparatively selective emphasis in order to incorporate some of its measurable constituent sub-categories such as lack of control or 'powerlessness' and 'self-

estrangement' or 'bad faith'. In addition, various aspects of control are also linked to alienation. Moreover, the wider ontological debate concerning alienation stemming from the writings of Hegel and Marx, while acknowledged in Chapter 2 to be significant within the broader societal context is largely ignored within the empirical milieu of this research.

The relevant hypotheses which the alienation construct address are 4, 5, 6 and 9. The items comprising the alienation construct are based mainly on Seeman's (1959) categorisation and comprise items within questions A1 (3, 4, 9); A2 (1, 4); A3 (1, 2, 3); A4 (9); A5 (1 – 13); B1 (1 – 8, 10, 11, 13-16, 18, 19); C1 (2, 3); E1 (1-8).

Seeman's categories of powerlessness, and self-estrangement were measured using a scale based on that of Mottaz (1981) which was adapted to the CSR work situation and which satisfy Cronbach coefficients of 0.92 and 0.88 respectively (as also reported by Sarroz et al (2002) in a different context). Items within questions A1, A2, A3 and A5 are concerned with powerlessness, including the extent to which CSRs have influence over their various tasks and the extent to which they lack both job autonomy and freedom to exert control over their work activities given actual and perceived technical and hierarchical constraints and pressure on their work domains. Self-estrangement occurs when the work process is regarded as alien to the individual and independent of his/her contributions. Aspects of the formal work situation reinforce the importance of functional roles and responsibilities to the organisation while extrinsic rewards may serve to limit the creative contributions of employees. Within the context of the call centre workplace, self-estrangement is not only associated with narrow job tasks which may not provide CSRs with acceptable levels of intrinsic job interest, but also with the quality of interaction between CSR and customer as addressed in Chapter 2 and quantified in question E1, items 1 – 8 (Table



5.6). Therefore, the degree of engagement or disengagement with the customer is a crucial aspect of the self-estrangement dimension; it also resonates with the notion of ‘bad faith’ and objectification of self within the CSR – customer relationship.

**Table 5.6 Customer Relations and Estrangement**

<i>E1: How do you feel about the people you deal with?</i>					
	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1. I feel very loyal towards my customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I do not think any differently towards my customers no matter how abusive or difficult they are	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I would treat customers better if I had more time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I think dealing with customers is boring because you always have to say the same thing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I always have to put on an act when speaking to customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I could give better service to customers if I had more time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Customers are sometimes so difficult, it makes my job unpleasant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### *The Satisfaction Construct*

It was pointed out in Chapter 3 that the definition of work satisfaction is intentionally broad-ranging, and this is reflected in the variety of questionnaire items. Many of the items are adapted from an established instrument used in the Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS) series dating from 1998. The relevant satisfaction items from the questionnaire for the main research of this thesis were taken from the 2004 WERS survey. It should also be noted that the previous WERS survey report of 1998 used the same instrument. The WERS scale items which were subjected to data reduction techniques using PRINCALS and FACTOR in SPSS, according to Rose, M., (2000) ‘seem to produce an acceptable indicator’ (p. 2).

108 items describe the satisfaction construct and include those under separate headings such as ‘extrinsics’, ‘intrinsic’ and ‘satisfaction with team leader’. The items within the questions are: A1 (1 – 10) dealing with the job and promotion prospects;



A2 (1 – 7) influence, achievement, variety and pay; A3 (1 – 3) influence; A4 (1-9) specifics concerning hours, job, pay, physical conditions, management and customers; A5 (1 – 13) job pressure (also linked to control); A8 (1-5) employee involvement; A9 (1-5) consultation; A10 (1-13) skills and training; C1 (1-10) people, desks, equipment; D1 (1-12) team and team relations; D2 (1-11) relations with team leader; and E1 (1-10) satisfaction with customers (also linked to self – estrangement). The most important items concern the A1, A2, A3 and A4 items which are reproduced below (tables 5.7; 5.8; 5.9; and 5.10).

**Table 5.7 Satisfaction With Job**

<i>A1: What is your job like?</i>					
	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1. My job requires that I work very hard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I never seem to have enough time to get my job done	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. There is a lot of pressure on me to make / take as many calls as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I do not like my calls being monitored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I feel my job is secure in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I am very satisfied with my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I would recommend this job to a friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I worry a lot about my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I think there is too much control over the way I work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I think there is a lot of scope for promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Table 5.8 Job and Contextual Influences**

<i>A2: How satisfied are you?</i>					
With:	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
1. The amount of influence I have over my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The sense of achievement I get from my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How much variety I have in doing my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The extent to which I am left alone to get on with the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The encouragement I get from my supervisor / team leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The amount of pay I receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The appreciation I get from my fellow teamworkers / colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Table 5.9 Influence over Job**

<b>A3: How much influence do you have?</b>					
On:	A lot	Some	A little	None	Don't know
1. The range of tasks I do in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The pace at which I work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How I do my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Table 5.10 Job and Work – Related Aspects**

<b>A4: What do you like about your job?</b>					
	strongly dislike	dislike	Neutral	like	like strongly
1. My team members / fellow workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. My job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. My pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Bonuses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Fringe benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The management here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The physical conditions (layout of desks etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The customers / clients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### *The Commitment Construct*

Commitment is, as discussed in Chapter 3, and for the purpose of the main investigation, considered to be multi-faceted, and explored within hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 9 and 10 as a co- variable. Commitment is operationalised through the adaptation of the Meyer and Allen scales and measures (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer and Allen, 1997) and to a lesser extent that of the British Organisational Commitment Scale (Cook and Wall, 1980). The Meyer and Allen measures incorporate elements of affective, continuance and normative scale items and, for the purposes of the research, some of the original scale items have been revised as a result of respondent information received in the exploratory research contexts in order to make them more comprehensible to respondents within the main investigation. The most important of the 61 commitment items are to be found in part B of the



questionnaire, comprising 26 items incorporating questions B1 and B2. The question items within B1 address commitment to the employing organisation in terms of loyalty (which is also used as a separate variable), pride and attachment, and intention to quit or remain, and are reproduced below in Table 5.11. Each of the items are measured through a distribution of responses along a 5 – point agree – disagree scale which is common throughout the questionnaire and which makes allowance for positively and negatively keyed items where the scoring is reversed (again typical throughout the questionnaire). Reliability, accuracy and internal consistency of the scales as reported by Allen and Meyer (1996) exceed Cronbach coefficient 0.70.

**Table 5.11 Organisational Commitment Items**

<i>B. 1: How do you feel about the company you work for?</i>	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1. I am quite proud to be able to tell people that I work for (company name)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I know the values of my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I share the values of my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I do not mind leaving my job even if there is no other job to go to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. At the moment, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity, not choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. One of the important reasons I stay with this organisation is that leaving would demand a lot of personal sacrifice; another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The offer of a bit more money with another employer would not seriously make me think of changing my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I feel loyal to this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I would not leave my organisation at the moment because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I owe a great deal to my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I sometimes feel like leaving this employment for good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I would end my employment here tomorrow given the opportunity of something different or better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Question B2 items address issues concerning perceptions of top management, their remoteness or proximity and their responsiveness to employee concerns (Table 5.12). Other questions incorporating commitment items include questions C2 (omitting item 1), which relate to call centre management excluding team leaders/managers; D2 concerning team leader items and E1 which deals with CSR - customer commitment (these are original items not based on established scales). Other questions with commitment items comprise A4, items 1, 7 and 9 (attachment to team, local management and customers), and C1, items 3 and 4 (work attachment).

**Table 5.12 Commitment To Management**

<i><b>B 2: Management in your organisation</b></i>	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1. I know who the top managers of my organisation are	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I feel that top management appreciate the concerns of ordinary employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I think that top management are too remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I do not think that top management communicate enough with ordinary employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I do not think its any of my business to know what top management are doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I care a lot about what top management are doing because it affects ordinary employees like myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### *The Interview Schedule*

For the exploratory research, the interview questions as described in Appendix 7 and below in Table 5.13 were devised to familiarise the researcher with the some of main problems and issues encountered and experienced by CSRs, and this, in turn, assisted in the design of questionnaire items. For purposes of generating qualitative data from the interview series, the main constraints upon the researcher were time and selection of interview candidates. The interview candidates were selected on a random basis of



one or two interviewees per team, depending upon the number of teams within each of the four call centres.

For the primary investigation, a series of semi-structured one-to-one interviews, as a supplemental research instrument, took place in each of the four call centres after questionnaires were distributed. In order to ensure a degree of accuracy and consistency, the questions were based upon each of the four main constructs of commitment, satisfaction, alienation and control. The interviews were incorporated into the research design and supplement the data captured from the questionnaire survey.

The main purpose of the interview programme was to provide a deeper focus upon each of the four constructs as interpreted by the interviewee who was allowed considerable latitude in the selection and interpretation of his/her response.

Notwithstanding the limitations of such an approach (Bechhofer and Paterson (2000), p. 69), the interview data tended to confirm questionnaire data for each of the four constructs and, in addition, provided a greater wealth of relevant detail than could be gleaned from a questionnaire response alone. There were 12 interviewees for each call centre workplace. The interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed. Recording of interviews enabled the interviewer to concentrate upon the interviewee response.

The full transcripts of the 48 interviews were subject to a content analysis and responses were clustered according to the constructs pertinent to each interview question. Six questions were asked of each interviewee and these are presented as Table 5. 13.



**Table 5.13 The Interview Questions**

Nature of question	Related construct
How satisfied are you with your work here?	Satisfaction
Has work any meaning for you?	Satisfaction; Alienation
Do you have any feelings of loyalty and commitment to your organisation?	Commitment
How do you view your relationship with customers?	Alienation (estrangement, bad faith)
Do you feel pressured by the management and the technology you work with?	Control dimension
How much control do you have over your own work?	CSR control over work
Does humour and 'having fun' feature in the work that you do?	Alienation, satisfaction
What do you think of your team members and team leader?	Commitment
What is your view of senior management in the organisation outside of this call centre?	Commitment

### 5.5.3 Implementation and Nature of the Sample, Data Capture and Data Preparation

In order to undertake data analysis using SPSS and other statistical tools, the assumption of representativeness is paramount as this permits generalisations to be made (Denscombe, 2002; Rose and Sullivan, 1996). A major issue for any research is that findings from the research sample are able to be applied and capable of being generalised to other comparable contexts, and therefore, in the first instance, it is



necessary to demonstrate that for each of the four call centre research contexts the findings derived from the generated data are representative of the whole population. Data was captured from the whole population of CSRs within each of the four call centres, thereby obviating the requirement to justify the use of various types of probability samples such as simple random, systematic, stratified and cluster sampling.

### *Questionnaire Design and Data Preparation*

The survey instrument or questionnaire is common to the four call centres investigated and was screened for completeness and consistency. The questionnaire was self-coded and no missing data were found. Table 5.14 provides an overview of the questionnaire sections. Open-ended questions were not used in this analysis. The instrument itself comprises five categories A – E of ordinal data where items (or variables using SPSS jargon) are subject to Likert-type scales. These categories and the variables/items within them correspond to the operationalised concepts and constructs (control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction) previously addressed and contain 171 variables. Category F of the questionnaire is concerned with personal data which is primarily of the nominal type with some qualitative items, and contains 13 variables in total.

The Likert scales as used in sections A-E contain five response categories as 5-point scales and each scale provides a neutral point in order to prevent artificial forcing of data into either a positive or negative opinion. Likert scales were chosen in order to reflect their common use by established scales within the extant literature and to emphasise that the design was driven by the research questions (Antonius 2004). The



operationalisation of the four main constructs and the design of the questionnaire also facilitates factor analysis and other established statistical techniques used in the analysis of the data. From a respondent perspective, questionnaires containing Likert scales are quick and relatively easy to answer, and from a design point of view this was a vital consideration given the relatively large number of items per question.

The questionnaire was designed with the aim of minimising the non-response. Likert scales allow for relatively rapid completion and are more user friendly than many other types of question (Cresswell, 2003). Design features such as the attached covering letter providing assurances of anonymity and confidentiality were also included. The questionnaire is divided into manageable sections which may help to reduce respondent fatigue and add some interest. However, it is recognised that extraneous factors also play a part in influencing the response rate. In relation to the four research contexts such factors would include the nature of shift working, time that managers allocate to respondents, whether CSRs were permitted to complete the questionnaire at their desk or elsewhere and the general disposition of managers towards the process.

**Table 5.14 Overview of Questionnaire Sections**

<b>Section A1-A11</b>	Job-related aspects; communication, information, involvement consultation and involvement; skills and training
<b>Section B1-B3</b>	Organisation, Organisation-wide and workplace management aspects
<b>Section C1-C2</b>	Workplace and workplace management aspects
<b>Section D1-D2</b>	Team relations and management
<b>Section E1</b>	Customer relations
<b>Section F</b>	Classification data of respondents



SPSS data files for each of the four call centres were created. The question numbers were used as variable names and all variables or items within each category of the questionnaire which for SPSS purposes are described in lower case (a1q 1 – f1q13), were pre-coded into numerical forms for computer analysis and entered into SPSS thereby facilitating analysis of the constructs underlying the category variables while maintaining variability and category sizes. Variable and value labels were created. The variable label describes the question while the value label describes the scale or category for that question.

The data containing the variables were then combined, re-coded and reduced with scale scorings reversed where applicable, in order to create composite variable categories which could then be subjected to statistical testing to establish data reliability using cronbach alpha values. All of the five scale categories for each of the variable constructs numbered 1-5 were assigned value labels thus: (0 through 1.49=1); (1.5 through 2.49=2); (2.5 through 3.49=3); (3.5 through 4.49=4); (4.5 through 5=5). The re-coded categories representing the composite or multiple variables together with measures of dispersion corresponding to each of the composite variable constructs (as addressed in the literature review, Chapters 2 and 3, and contained within the hypotheses) are described in Table 5.15 which illustrates the extent to which the mean score for each composite variable adequately represents the data for each variable in terms of goodness-of-fit. The principal constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction are augmented by a number of other related constructs are also identified in Table 5.15.



**Table 5.15 Measures of dispersion**

<b>Variable Construct</b>	<b>Number of items per construct</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Commitment	61	847	3.0885	.57155
Satisfaction	108	862	2.9269	.27348
Alienation	48	868	3.1740	.50228
Satisfaction with leader	25	868	2.9067	.81469
Loyalty	37	868	3.1889	.67499
Quality of customer interaction	10	868	3.0472	.57139
Human resource practices	83	866	2.9065	.45797
Intention to quit	8	863	3.5029	.82714
Management and technical control	16	868	3.3456	.53946
Team relations	15	868	2.4919	.56313
Extrinsics	26	868	2.9816	.32523
Intrinsics	17	868	2.6198	.57689
Involvement and consultation	25	868	2.8767	.67737
CSR control over work operations	10	868	3.0173	.75388

the variables and constructs in terms of outcomes and predictors and the nature of the association between constructs. The process whereby this was undertaken is now described.

#### **5.5.4 Data Analysis**

The overall sample size of 1372 CSRs represents the population of CSRs within each of the call centres researched. Raw data was collected from 868 respondents comprising 68.2 per cent of the total population (Table 5.15).

The completed questionnaire responses for each item were loaded on to the existing SPSS data file for exploratory data analysis. The response rate was highest at Regal (79.2%) and lowest at Vortexia (55.7%). Large-scale surveys raise non-response issues for researchers (Rose and Sullivan, 1996), particularly concerning how representative the sample is of the population. The issues concerning non response and how questionnaire design could minimise the response were addressed in 5.5.3.



With regard to missing data, the overall level is low. Although Hair *et al*, (2006) contends that missing data 'is still one of the most troublesome issues in most research settings' (p. 98), the level of missing data from this research output was not problematic and did not justify deletion of responses or variables.

Summary statistics were obtained for each item comprising the composite variables for the purpose of descriptive analysis, and bivariate analysis was undertaken in order to compare mean scores between two variables such as gender and satisfaction using t tests. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed in order to compare means of three or more variables such as age, length of service and commitment. It should be noted that although bivariate analysis was used, the results are not reported Chapter 7 as they are not germane to the research questions and hypotheses. Finally, for purposes of hypothesis testing, the predictive model derived from the hypotheses was subjected to multiple regression and chi-square analysis in order to predict values of the variables and constructs in terms of outcomes and predictors and the nature of the association between constructs. The process whereby this was undertaken is now described.

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Descriptive statistics are concerned with the interpretation and summarisation of frequency distributions of the number of items in the categories of a variable, and percentage distributions and indicates how the questions were responded to.

Individual item statistics were obtained for each item (nominal and ordinal) which indicated the extent of missing data. Percentage distributions for each item across the Likert scales were also calculated. The main measure of central tendency used is the



arithmetic mean and this was calculated for each item along the re-coded scales. The standard deviation provides information concerning dispersion or variance about the mean and was calculated for each item. Frequency and percentage distributions were also calculated for the construct categories identified in Table 5.15. Table 5.15 also includes statistics for the mean and standard deviation.

### *Multiple Regression*

Multiple regression comprises a variety of techniques that can be used to explore the relationship between one continuous dependent variable (construct) and one or more independent variables (constructs). While multiple regression is based on correlation, it allows for a more sophisticated exploration of the interrelationship among a set of variables. Multiple regression was used in this research to address the hypotheses which stemmed from the research questions. For each hypothesis, the independent variables (constructs) were entered into the equation simultaneously and evaluated in terms of its predictive power in order to explain the variance in the dependent variable (construct). The relative contribution of each independent variable was also determined. Tests were conducted in order to determine the statistical significance of the results, both in terms of the model itself, and the individual independent variables. Examples of the analysis are given in Table 5.16 for hypothesis 3: That intention to quit is negatively associated with commitment, and hypothesis 1: That customer interaction, loyalty to employer, satisfaction with leader and HR practices are positively associated with commitment.



**Table 5.16 Hypothesis 3 Regression Analysis: Impact of Intention to Quit on Commitment**

Factor	Beta		T	Significance	
Intention to quit	.739		32.173	.000	
Model Summary	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std error of estimate	
	.739	.545	.545	.37744	
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	147.188	1	147.188	1033.168	.000
Residual	122.160	861	.142		
Total	269.848	862			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship	Chi-square	Direction			
Intention to quit with commitment	Yes	High intention to quit: Moderate to low commitment			

Table 5.16 describes how much of the variance in the dependent variable intention to quit is explained by the model. In this case the R square value is .545 which means that the model explains 54.5 per cent of the variance in commitment. The ANOVA tests the statistical significance of the result. Finally, the Chi-square test determines the direction of the relationship between the variables.

### 5.5.5 Validity

Validity is concerned with drawing meaningful and useful inferences from scores on the instrument and to measure what the instrument is intended to measure. There are at least three traditional forms of validity identified in the methods literature. These are content validity which is concerned with whether the items measure the content they were intended to measure; predictive validity of constructs as dependent and independent variables and thirdly construct validity concerning whether items



**Table 5. 17 Hypothesis 1 Regression Analysis: Impact of Human Resource Practices, Customer/CSR Interaction, Loyalty, Satisfaction with Team Leader on Commitment**

Factor	Beta	T	Significance		
Human Resource Practices	.097	6.558	.000		
Customer interaction	.157	21.777	.000		
Loyalty	.581	54.411	.000		
Satisfaction with Leader	.273	18.862	.000		
Model Summary	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std error of estimate	
	.985	.970	.970	.09664	
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	262.884	4	65.711	7036.023	.000
Residual	8.060	863	.009		
Total	270.904	867			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship	Chi-square	Direction			
Customer interaction with commitment	Yes	Moderate customer interaction: Moderate to low commitment			
Loyalty to employer with commitment	Yes	Low loyalty: Moderate to low commitment			
Satisfaction with leader with commitment	Yes	Moderate satisfaction: Moderate to low commitment			
HR practices with commitment	yes	Moderate to high HRP: Moderate to low commitment			

Table 5.17 describes how much of the variance in the dependent variables HR practices, customer interaction, loyalty and satisfaction with leader is explained by the model, again using ANOVA and Ch-square tests.

### 5.5.5 Validity

Validity is concerned with drawing meaningful and useful inferences from scores on the instrument and to measure what the instrument is intended to measure. There are at least three traditional forms of validity identified in the methods literature. These are content validity which is concerned with whether the items measure the content they were intended to measure; predictive validity of constructs as dependent and independent variables and thirdly construct validity concerning whether items



measure hypothetical constructs or concepts. As described in 5.5.2, established scales measuring the four principal constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction were adapted and amended to some extent. This could indeed pose a threat to the validity of these modified scales and therefore to both the scale items and constructs as dependent and independent variables. In order to determine the validity of new items not previously validated, Principal Components Analysis as the extraction method and Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization were employed, together with factor analysis in order to examine and ensure acceptable levels of variable communality and multicollinearity. All factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted, and a cut-off loading of 0.45 was used to screen out variables that were weak indicators of the constructs. All variables loaded satisfactorily onto the latent factors.

In addition, each of the constructs was measured using multiple items that have emerged from previous research. The reliability of the items used in each construct was confirmed using the Cronbach alpha test.

## **5.6 Summary**

The chapter has described the research methods used for the three phases of the research as identified in Table 5.2. The chapter has concentrated on the primary research for this thesis. The procedures utilised and described in the chapter have helped to defend the rigour and robustness of the research design, data collection and of the data analysis itself.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Results**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results and analyses of the main fieldwork data. These results are concerned with issues relating to the population and samples, the survey instruments, variables and constructs. The data analysis methods used were explained and justified in Chapter 5. The chapter commences with a description of the respondent profile. This is followed by an account of the descriptive statistics relating to the constructs and questionnaire items, both of which were explained in Chapter 5. Finally, the results of the statistical analyses concerning each of the ten hypotheses are presented. A discussion and analysis of the findings as applied to the four main constructs and to the hypotheses, with regard to extant literature and their implications, are given in Chapter 7.

#### **6.2 Respondent profile**

The respondent profile comprises the categorical variables of age, gender, length of service, previous employment, nature of employment contract, yearly absence, staff turnover, membership of staff associations and membership of trade unions. The detail of those various aspects of the respondents' profile are presented in Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3



### 6.2.1 Respondent Age, Gender and Length of Service

Data concerning age, gender and length of service are provided in Table 6.1. With regard to age, the majority of respondents (73.2 per cent) fall within the two age bands ranging from 18 – 27 years. This confirms national survey results which indicate that the age profile of call centre workers are similarly skewed (IDS, 2008). Table 6.1 also confirms that the majority of call centre workers are female which also reflects the broader national distribution. Data with regard to length of service indicate that 51 per cent of respondents have less than twelve months service in their current call centre. However, Table 6.1 also indicates 32.4 per cent of respondents have experienced previous employment in at least one other call centre than the one in which they are currently employed.

**Table 6.1 Respondents' Personal Profile: Age, Gender and Length of Service**

<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
18-22	341	39.3	Female	471	55.7
23-27	294	33.9	Male	345	40.8
28-35	127	14.6	Missing	51	3.5
36-45	59	6.8	Total	868	100
Over 45	27	3.1			
Missing	20	2.3			
Total	868	100			
<b>Length of service in current call centre</b>				<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 6 months				219	25.2
Less than 1 year				224	25.8
1-2 years				305	35.1
3-5 years				91	10.5
6-10 years				18	2.1
11+ years				1	0.1
Missing				10	1.2
Total				868	100
<b>Length of service in all call centres</b>				<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 1 year				138	15.9
1-2 years				172	19.8
3-5 years				281	32.4
6-10 years				178	20.5
11+ years				1	0.1
Missing				98	11.3



Total	868	100
<b>Previous employment in call centres</b>		
Previously employed	360	41.4
Not previously employed	441	50.8
Missing	67	7.8
Total	868	100

## 6.2.2 Respondents' Contracts, Absence, Turnover and Staff Association / Union

### Membership

Table 6.2 indicates that the majority of respondents (66.1 per cent) are full-time employees. However, a significant minority of respondents (22.4 per cent) are part-time employees, the majority of whom are agency workers. With regard to absence, respondents were asked to specify the duration of their absence during the past year, with 24.3 per cent of respondents reporting absence duration of more than ten days. Significant here is the relatively large proportion of respondents who chose not to provide a response, which is not surprising given the sensitive nature of the question. Staff turnover is high for all periods, with a 24 per cent annual rate of churn which reflects national data (IDS, 2008). Staff association and trade union membership as indicated within table 6.2 is extremely low and is a reflection of the uneven spread of staff association and trade union membership within call centres generally.

**Table 6.2 Respondents' Employment Profile: Contracts, Absence, Turnover and Staff Association / Union Membership**

<b>Nature of contract</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Yearly absence</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Full-time	574	66.1	1-2 days	171	19.7
Part-time	224	25.8	Up to 5 days	166	19.1
Missing	70	8.1	Up to 10 days	121	13.9
Total	868	100	More than 10 days	211	24.3
			Missing	199	22.9
			Total	868	100
<b>Agency employees</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Staff turnover</b>	<b>%</b>	
Yes	141	16.2	3 months		15
No	639	73.6	6 months		21
Missing	88	10.2	9 months		13



Total	868	100	12 months		24
<b>Membership of staff association</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Membership of trade union</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	19	2.2	Yes	52	6.0
No	823	94.8	No	796	91.7
Missing	26	3	Missing	20	2.3
Total	868	100	Total	868	100

### 6.2.3 Respondents' Employment Function

The respondents' employment roles are presented in Table 6.3. 89.7 per cent of respondents' roles are within the sales, service, technical support and sales and service categories. The 'technical support' category comprises those workers whose role is essentially that of providing service but within a telecommunications and media context. Hence the service and technical support categories comprise 59.6 per cent of respondents. A minority of respondents assumed both the roles of sales and support.

**Table 6.3 Respondents' Employment Function**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Sales	72	8.3
Service	308	35.5
Technical Support	209	24.1
Sales and Service	189	21.8
General Duties	57	6.6
Missing	33	3.8
Total	868	100

### 6.3. Descriptive statistics

Tables 6.4 – 6.17 comprise frequency tables of items in each construct. The items within each table are the actual questions which comprise the questionnaire and which were distributed to the call centre population. Each of the constructs was measured using multiple items that



have emerged from previous research. The reliability of the items used in each construct was confirmed using the cronbach alpha test.

The multiple constructs are: Human Resource Management Practices (83 items); Intention to Quit (8 items); Alienation (48 items); Commitment (61 items); Satisfaction (108 items); Loyalty (37 items); Quality of Customer Interaction (10 items); Satisfaction with Leader (25 items); Employee Control over Work Operations (10 items); Management / Technological Control (16 items); Intrinsic (17 items); Team Relations (15 items); Involvement / Consultation (25 items); Extrinsic (26 items). The constructs themselves were addressed in greater detail in Chapter 5 together with an explanation of the reasoning behind the use of the same items for a number of constructs.

### **6.3.1 Human Resource Management Practices: Consultation, Communication, Involvement and Training**

Tables 6.4 -6.7 provide frequency data for consultation with team manager, communications, involvement and training.

#### ***Consultation***

With regard to consultation, 38.9 and 56.5 per cent of respondents were never consulted with regard to promotion and pay respectively, but nevertheless the data indicates varying levels of consultation on three issues apart from pay.



<b>Table 6.4 HRM Practices: Consultation</b>													
Annually		Every 6 months		Every 3 months		Every month		Every 2 weeks		Never		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How often do you discuss with your team manager how you are getting on with your job?</b>													
59	6.8	84	9.7	157	18.1	301	34.7	210	24.2	54	6.2	3.79	1.278
<b>How often do you discuss with your team manager your chances of promotion</b>													
94	10.8	78	9	99	11.4	177	20.4	80	9.2	338	38.9	4.25	1.745
<b>How often do you discuss with your team manager your training needs?</b>													
130	15.0	95	10.9	108	12.4	287	33.1	136	15.7	108	12.4	3.61	1.558
<b>How often do you discuss with your team manager your pay?</b>													
143	16.5	43	5.0	74	8.5	73	8.4	40	4.6	490	56.5	4.50	1.962

### **Communication**

As Table 6.5 indicates, the methods of communication that were most frequently helpful were email, meetings with team leaders and team briefings, with notice boards and magazines / journals being the least helpful.

<b>Table 6.5 HRM Practices: Communication</b>													
Very helpful		Helpful		Not very helpful		Not at all helpful		Not used here		Mean	SD		
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%				
<b>How helpful are notice boards in keeping you up to date?</b>													
91	10.5	216	24.9	255	29.4	198	22.8	106	12.2	3.01	1.179		
<b>How helpful is email in keeping you up to date?</b>													
276	31.8	209	24.1	116	13.4	111	12.8	152	17.5	2.60	1.481		
<b>How helpful are workplace newsletters or magazines in keeping you up to date?</b>													
80	9.2	205	23.6	299	34.4	142	16.4	140	16.1	3.07	1.189		
<b>How helpful are meetings of team leaders and employees in keeping you up to date?</b>													
93	10.7	331	38.1	208	24.0	153	17.6	81	9.3	2.77	1.144		
<b>How helpful are team briefings in keeping you up to date?</b>													
135	15.6	376	43.3	143	16.5	102	11.8	111	12.8	2.63	1.245		

### **Involvement**

The results concerning involvement (Table 6.6) indicate low frequencies for eliciting views on planning, redundancy, work practices, pay and health and safety. The outcomes for the following five items - work problems, fair treatment, proposed changes and responding to employee suggestions - were more evenly distributed.



**Table 6.6 HRM Practices: Involvement**

Frequently		Sometimes		Hardly ever		Never		Don't know		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on future plans for the workplace?</b>											
74	8.5	225	25.9	202	23.3	332	38.2	31	3.6	2.75	1.021
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on staffing issues including redundancy?</b>											
32	3.7	149	17.2	239	27.5	408	47.0	37	4.3	2.82	1.017
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on changes to work practices?</b>											
88	10.1	225	25.9	209	24.1	334	38.5	9	1.0	2.67	0.985
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on pay issues?</b>											
43	5.0	150	17.3	250	28.8	403	46.4	17	2.0	2.76	0.990
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on health and safety at work?</b>											
56	6.5	181	20.9	259	29.8	352	40.6	15	1.7	2.80	0.999
Very good		Good		Neutral		Poor		Very poor		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How good are managers and leaders at dealing with work problems you or others may have?</b>											
84	9.7	280	32.3	232	26.7	167	19.2	103	11.9	2.91	1.172
<b>How good are managers at treating employees fairly?</b>											
105	12.1	318	36.6	206	23.7	167	19.2	103	11.9	2.79	1.204
<b>How good are managers and leaders at providing everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes?</b>											
67	7.7	234	27.0	228	26.3	193	22.2	144	16.6	3.13	1.205
<b>How good are managers and leaders at keeping everyone up-to-date about proposed changes?</b>											
134	15.4	243	28.0	205	23.6	203	23.4	81	9.3	2.83	1.217
<b>How good are managers and leaders at responding to suggestions from employees?</b>											
80	9.2	176	20.3	272	31.3	180	8.3	159	18.3	3.19	1.217

**Skills**

With regard to skills, Table 6.7 indicates awareness amongst respondents that different types of skills concerning the job, customers, products and services are important but that the quality of skills training and the frequency of skills training are deficient, particularly with regard to the need for more training after the initial training period and more time spent on staff training generally.



<b>Table 6.7 HRM Practices: Skills</b>											
<b>Strongly agree</b>		<b>Slightly agree</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Slightly disagree</b>		<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>My job does not require many skills</b>											
89	10.3	269	31.0	144	16.6	234	27.0	132	15.2	3.06	1.263
<b>I need more skills to do my job effectively</b>											
28	3.2	206	23.7	224	25.8	252	29.0	156	18.0	3.35	1.122
<b>My job would benefit from being multi-skilled</b>											
189	21.8	231	26.6	251	28.9	119	13.7	77	8.9	2.61	1.218
<b>If I were more skilled I would be more interested in my job</b>											
99	11.4	239	7.5	249	28.7	143	16.5	123	14.2	2.94	1.220
<b>Verbal skills concerning customers are important for my job</b>											
446	51.4	215	24.8	126	14.5	31	3.6	47	5.4	1.86	1.130
<b>More knowledge of the type of customer I am dealing with is important for my job</b>											
302	34.8	265	30.5	225	25.9	44	5.1	30	3.5	2.12	1.054
<b>Knowledge of the product(s) and service(s) I am dealing with is important for my job</b>											
349	40.2	269	31.0	165	19.0	58	6.7	26	3.0	2.01	1.064
<b>More familiarity with the hardware and software that I am using is important for my job</b>											
326	37.6	281	32.4	187	21.5	43	5.0	29	3.3	2.04	1.045
<b>I get enough training to do my job well</b>											
135	15.6	293	33.8	238	27.4	140	16.1	60	6.9	2.65	1.131
<b>I do not get enough training after my initial training period</b>											
134	15.4	337	38.8	221	25.5	110	12.7	61	7.0	2.57	1.112
<b>My organisation should spend more time and effort on training its staff</b>											
231	26.6	243	28.0	237	27.3	105	12.1	50	5.8	2.42	1.170
<b>The training I do get is of a high standard</b>											
137	15.6	205	23.6	308	35.5	127	14.6	88	10.1	2.80	1.177
<b>The training I get leaves a lot to be desired</b>											
164	18.9	174	20.0	274	31.6	178	20.5	75	8.6	2.80	1.214
<b>During the past 12 months I have received no training</b>											
89	10.3	100	11.5	205	23.6	151	17.4	308	35.5	3.57	1.353
<b>During the past 12 months I have received less than 1 days training</b>											
90	10.4	71	8.2	203	23.4	111	12.8	381	43.9	3.73	1.374
<b>During the past 12 months I have received 1-2 days training</b>											
101	11.6	71	8.2	224	25.8	85	9.8	372	42.9	3.65	1.408
<b>During the past 12 months I have received 2-5 days training</b>											
146	16.8	121	13.9	184	21.2	67	7.7	331	38.1	3.37	1.353
<b>During the past 12 months I have received 5-10 days training</b>											
118	13.6	63	13.6	207	23.8	97	11.2	364	41.9	3.62	1.442
<b>During the past 12 months I have received 10 days or more of training</b>											
100	11.5	76	8.8	220	25.3	87	10.0	366	42.2	3.64	1.407
<b>During the past 6 months I have received up to 10 days or more of training</b>											
150	17.3	44	5.1	214	24.7	81	9.3	296	34.1	3.42	1.503

### 6.3.2 Human Resource Management Practices

Tables 6.8 – 6.11 are concerned with the extent to which call centre workers view their relationships with local call centre management, their team members, their team leaders and customers.



## Management Relations in Management

With regard to relations with local management, the HRM practice element relates to issues such as whether managers treat employees fairly; whether management respond to suggestions and deal with employee problems; whether management inform employees about proposed workplace changes and whether managers help develop skills and encourage employees to meet their family responsibilities. The results from table 6.8 present a marginally negative view of local management on many items. The negatively viewed items comprise 'remoteness', responding to suggestions, commenting and keeping employees up-to-date about proposed changes, the employment relationship, skills development and family responsibilities.

**Table 6.8 Attitudes Towards HRM Practices: Relations with Local Management**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I get on well with managers in this call/contact centre</b>											
137	15.8	241	27.8	269	31.0	123	14.2	85	9.8	2.74	1.183
<b>I think managers treat employees fairly</b>											
100	11.5	232	26.7	237	27.3	161	18.5	126	14.5	2.98	1.231
<b>I think managers are good at dealing with problems employees may have</b>											
68	7.8	249	28.7	237	27.3	186	21.4	115	13.2	3.04	1.168
<b>I think most managers are remote and don't care about employees</b>											
75	8.6	178	20.5	240	27.6	233	26.8	130	15.0	3.19	1.184
<b>I think managers respond to suggestions from employees</b>											
54	6.2	174	20.0	291	33.5	194	22.4	144	16.6	3.23	1.140
<b>I think managers here provide everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes</b>											
40	4.6	179	20.6	252	29.0	225	25.9	158	18.2	3.33	1.137
<b>I think managers keep everyone up-to-date about proposed changes</b>											
71	8.7	196	22.6	240	27.6	188	21.7	159	18.3	3.20	1.221
<b>I think relations between managers and employees in this call centre are very good</b>											
69	7.9	194	22.4	279	32.1	169	19.5	145	16.7	3.15	1.185
<b>I think managers encourage employees to develop their skills</b>											
70	8.1	194	22.4	290	33.4	177	20.4	123	14.2	3.10	1.163
<b>I think managers are understanding about employees having to meet family responsibilities</b>											
81	9.3	170	19.6	267	30.8	153	17.6	185	21.3	3.22	1.254



## Team Relations and Team Management

Table 6.9 describes intra team relations, and with two exceptions are viewed overwhelmingly positively. The exceptions include the view that the team is viewed more as a work rather than a social unit and the very marginally negative view of the statement that the team is only as good as its leader.

**Table 6.9 Attitudes Towards HRM Practices: Intra Team Relations**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I get on well with members of my team</b>											
461	53.1	230	26.5	120	13.8	24	2.8	20	2.3	3.22	1.254
<b>I feel loyal to my team</b>											
292	33.6	267	30.8	209	24.1	65	7.5	22	2.5	2.13	1.051
<b>I do not think the team I work in is very helpful to its members</b>											
44	5.1	82	9.4	189	21.8	220	25.3	316	36.4	3.80	1.186
<b>I think the team makes the job bearable</b>											
268	30.9	278	32.0	224	25.8	37	4.3	43	5.0	2.19	1.084
<b>I think the team is more valuable for social rather than work activities</b>											
64	7.4	123	14.2	415	47.8	175	20.2	78	9.0	3.09	1.003
<b>I could get on with my work just as well if I were not a member of a team</b>											
111	12.8	213	24.5	251	28.9	179	20.6	100	11.5	2.93	1.202
<b>I think the team makes me work more efficiently and productively</b>											
147	16.9	239	27.5	340	39.2	89	10.3	38	4.4	2.57	1.033
<b>There is a lot of disagreement about work amongst the team members</b>											
39	4.5	71	8.2	262	30.2	218	25.1	264	30.4	3.70	1.127
<b>In my experience teams do not perform very well</b>											
26	3.0	67	7.7	224	25.8	231	26.6	306	35.3	3.85	1.089
<b>I think the team is only as good as the leader</b>											
112	12.9	180	20.7	257	29.6	135	15.6	167	19.2	3.08	1.295
<b>I think the team makes my work less stressful and pressurised</b>											
187	21.5	276	31.8	245	28.2	96	11.1	50	5.8	2.47	1.125
<b>I get a lot of respect from my team members</b>											
207	23.8	253	29.1	319	36.8	43	5.0	32	3.7	2.34	1.018

Team leadership / management (Table 6.10), in contrast to views concerning call centre management, is also viewed in a positive light with the one exception being that the team leader would not influence decisions to leave employment.



<b>Table 6.10 Attitudes Towards HRM Practices: The Team Manager/Leader</b>											
<b>Strongly agree</b>		<b>Slightly agree</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Slightly disagree</b>		<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>If it were not for my team manager I would have left this call centre by now</b>											
49	5.6	115	13.2	221	25.5	158	18.2	310	35.7	3.66	1.252
<b>My team manager motivates me to do my job</b>											
93	10.7	293	33.8	219	25.2	146	16.8	102	11.8	2.85	1.187
<b>I do not get much respect from my team manager</b>											
72	8.3	95	10.9	213	24.5	188	21.7	285	32.8	3.61	1.280
<b>My team manager is concerned about my training needs</b>											
159	18.3	291	33.5	167	19.2	145	16.7	90	10.4	2.67	1.254
<b>My team manager encourages me to develop my skills</b>											
179	20.6	297	34.2	167	19.2	145	16.7	90	10.4	2.54	1.189
<b>My team manager is concerned about my promotion prospects</b>											
100	11.5	201	23.2	256	29.5	126	14.5	54	6.2	3.07	1.281
<b>I am always kept up-to-date by my team manager about call centre matters</b>											
203	23.4	254	29.3	177	20.4	110	12.7	107	12.3	2.61	1.316
<b>My team manager is understanding about my having to meet my family responsibilities</b>											
171	19.7	208	24.0	319	36.8	91	10.5	62	7.1	2.61	1.137
<b>My team manager always gives me a chance to comment on any proposed changes affecting the call centre</b>											
141	16.2	211	24.3	256	29.5	133	15.3	109	12.6	2.83	1.247
<b>Table 6.10 Attitudes Towards HRM Practices: The Team Manager/Leader</b>											
<b>My team manager is always helpful in dealing with problems I or my team members may have</b>											
273	31.5	257	29.6	200	23.0	41	4.7	81	9.3	2.30	1.232
<b>My team manager always responds to suggestions from employees</b>											
165	19.0	260	30.0	200	23.0	41	4.7	81	9.3	2.57	1.167

### Customer Relations

Table 6.11 describes respondents' views of the customer relationship. These are largely positive with the exception of views concerning abusive and difficult customers.



**Table 6.11 Attitudes Towards HRM Practices: Customer Orientation**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I feel very loyal towards my customers</b>											
126	14.5	234	27.0	275	31.7	111	12.8	112	12.9	2.82	1.167
<b>I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work</b>											
271	31.2	261	30.1	211	24.3	73	8.4	43	5.0	2.25	1.136
<b>I do not think any differently towards my customers no matter how abusive or difficult they are</b>											
97	11.2	181	20.9	238	27.4	241	27.8	100	11.5	3.08	1.186
<b>I would treat customers better if I had more time</b>											
135	15.6	202	23.3	250	28.8	167	19.2	100	11.5	2.88	1.233
<b>I think dealing with customers is boring because you always have to say the same thing</b>											
103	11.9	164	18.9	253	29.1	206	23.7	130	15.0	3.11	1.229
<b>I always have to put on an act when speaking to customers</b>											
113	13.0	156	18.0	237	27.3	193	22.2	158	18.2	3.15	1.285
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more time</b>											
136	15.7	163	18.8	262	30.2	193	22.2	103	11.9	2.96	1.237
<b>Customers are sometimes so difficult, it makes my job unpleasant</b>											
193	22.2	282	32.5	252	29.0	76	8.8	55	6.3	2.44	1.122
<b>This sort of call centre gives customers a very good service</b>											
139	16.0	283	32.6	319	36.8	55	6.3	61	6.3	2.55	1.062
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more regular training</b>											
87	10.0	253	29.1	325	37.4	120	13.8	72	8.3	2.81	1.069

Table 6.12 presents the distribution of the aggregate responses to all the items in the HRM practices construct summarises all the items for the ‘HRM practices’ construct. The distribution confirms that overall, only 6 per cent of respondents had a negative view of HRM practices.

**Table 6.12 Human Resource Practices: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Medium		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
0	0	135	15.6	677	78.0	54	6.2	0	0	2.91	.458

### 6.3.3 Intention to Quit

Table 6.13 describes respondents’ views with regard to leaving the organisation. The data reveal that the link between call centre workers and the wider organisation is tenuous. For



example, 43.5 per cent of respondents do not feel any obligation towards their employer and 49.4 per cent would leave if offered something better.

**Table 6.13 Attitudes towards Leaving the Organisation**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>The offer of more money with another employer would not make me think of changing my job</b>											
128	14.7	114	13.1	152	17.5	218	25.1	247	28.5	3.40	1.406
<b>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer</b>											
228	26.3	149	17.2	266	30.6	131	15.1	83	9.6	2.64	1.285
<b>Even if it were to my advantage I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now</b>											
57	6.6	67	7.7	222	25.6	188	21.7	320	36.9	3.76	1.222
<b>I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now</b>											
53	6.1	88	10.1	168	19.4	188	21.7	364	41.9	3.84	1.248
<b>I would not leave my organisation at the moment because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it</b>											
47	5.4	93	10.7	268	30.9	164	18.9	284	32.7	3.64	1.201
<b>I sometimes feel like leaving this employment for good</b>											
222	25.6	185	21.3	193	22.2	128	14.7	129	14.9	2.72	1.388
<b>I would end my employment here tomorrow given the opportunity of something different or better</b>											
283	32.6	146	16.8	233	26.8	66	7.6	125	14.4	2.54	1.396

Table 6. 14 summarises all the items for the ‘intention to quit’ construct. The five categories range from ‘highly unlikely’ (1) to ‘highly likely’ (5). The summary confirms the weak link between employee and both their organisation and employment.

**Table 6.14 Intention to Quit: Compound Scores**

Highly likely		Likely		Neutral		Unlikely		Highly unlikely		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
109	12.6	289	33.3	397	45.7	63	7.3	5	0.6	3.50	.827

#### 6.3.4 Alienation: Work Characteristics and Pressure

Tables 6.15 and 6.16 describe respondents’ views of alienation in relation to certain work characteristics and perceived pressure concerning their job. Respondents felt a great deal of pressure to make as many calls as possible (69.4 per cent), did not like calls being monitored (44.3 per cent) and thought there was too much control over the way they worked (45.9 per



cent). Respondents also felt that there was little influence they could exert over various aspects of their job but were largely neutral about feelings of liking / disliking customers.

**Table 6. 15 Subjective Aspects of Alienation at Work: Work Characteristics**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>There is a lot of pressure on me to make/take as many calls as possible</b>											
356	41.0	255	29.4	149	17.2	55	6.3	49	5.6	2.06	1.161
<b>I do not like my calls being monitored</b>											
174	20.0	211	24.3	289	33.3	103	11.9	89	10.3	2.68	1.215
<b>I think there is too much control over the way I work</b>											
181	20.9	217	25.0	260	30.0	157	18.1	49	5.6	2.63	1.166
Very satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Satisfied with the amount of influence over my job</b>											
37	4.3	169	19.5	350	40.3	246	28.3	65	7.5	3.15	0.963
<b>Satisfied with the extent to which I am left alone to get on with the job</b>											
161	18.5	278	32.0	210	24.2	139	16.0	76	8.8	2.64	1.206
A lot		Some		A little		None		Don't know		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How much influence on the range of tasks I do in my job</b>											
72	8.3	187	21.5	198	22.8	392	45.2	19	2.2	3.11	1.037
<b>How much influence over the pace at which I work</b>											
123	14.2	231	26.6	158	18.2	332	38.2	23	2.6	2.89	1.145
<b>How much influence I have on how I do my work</b>											
132	15.2	238	27.4	247	28.5	226	26.0	25	2.9	2.74	1.092
Strongly dislike		Dislike		Neutral		Like		Like strongly		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I like the customers/clients</b>											
81	9.3	150	17.3	521	60.0	111	12.8	65	7.5	2.78	0.803

Table 6.16 indicates that respondents felt some or a great deal of pressure over a range of items with the exception of pressure emanating from supervisor / team leader, pressure through computer monitoring and pressure from 'putting on an act' over the telephone.



**Table 6. 16 Subjective Aspects of Alienation at Work: Work Pressure**

A great deal		To some extent		Not much		Not at all		Does not apply		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am pressured by targets</b>											
307	35.4	360	41.5	164	18.9	26	3.0	11	1.3	1.93	0.879
<b>I am pressured by having my calls taped</b>											
221	25.5	246	28.3	287	33.1	85	9.8	26	3.0	2.36	1.058
<b>I am pressured by the repetitiveness of calls made</b>											
247	28.5	321	37.0	238	27.4	47	5.4	11	1.3	2.14	0.936
<b>I am pressured by not having enough time between calls</b>											
286	32.9	313	36.1	185	21.3	63	7.3	18	2.1	2.09	1.008
<b>I am pressured by having to keep to a script</b>											
173	19.9	232	26.7	250	28.8	127	14.6	84	9.7	2.67	1.223
<b>I am pressured by difficult customers</b>											
275	31.7	324	37.3	177	20.4	67	7.7	22	2.5	2.12	1.024
<b>I am pressured by my supervisor/team leader</b>											
124	14.3	180	20.7	341	39.3	195	22.5	24	2.8	2.79	1.037
<b>I am pressured by too few breaks</b>											
193	22.2	267	30.8	214	24.7	161	18.5	32	3.7	2.51	1.136
<b>I am pressured by breaks being too short</b>											
240	27.6	281	32.4	172	19.8	145	16.7	29	3.3	2.36	1.149
<b>I am pressured by computer monitoring</b>											
175	20.2	166	19.1	306	35.3	175	20.2	43	5.0	2.71	1.148
<b>I am pressured because there is not enough time to talk to colleagues</b>											
205	23.6	177	20.4	309	35.6	140	16.1	35	4.0	2.56	1.134
<b>I am pressured by the monotony of the job</b>											
303	34.9	237	27.3	201	23.2	95	10.9	27	3.1	2.20	1.127
<b>I am pressured because I always have to put on an act when on the 'phone</b>											
153	17.6	245	28.2	252	29.0	140	16.1	64	7.4	2.67	3.15

### 6.3.5 Alienation: Organisational Characteristics and Customer Identification

Table 6.17 describes respondents' feelings concerning their attachment to their organisation. On the whole respondents experienced higher degrees of alienation than non-alienation from the organisation and employer, the only exception being feelings of 'liking for the people in this call centre'.

Table 6.18 indicates that feelings towards customers were generally positive, indicating lower levels of alienation with regard to customer, compared with the higher levels of organisational alienation.



**Table 6.17 Subjective Aspects of Alienation at Work: Organisational Characteristics**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am proud to tell people I work for my organisation</b>											
86	9.9	189	21.8	279	32.1	130	15.0	181	20.9	3.15	1.258
<b>I know the values of my organisation</b>											
172	19.8	238	27.4	221	25.5	85	9.8	147	16.9	2.76	1.341
<b>I share the values of my organisation</b>											
106	12.2	199	22.9	283	32.6	101	11.6	173	19.9	3.04	1.282
<b>I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation</b>											
75	8.6	89	10.3	233	26.8	158	18.2	308	35.5	3.62	1.296
<b>I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation</b>											
173	19.9	185	21.3	237	27.3	158	18.2	107	12.3	2.82	1.292
<b>I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation</b>											
156	18.0	193	22.2	265	30.5	152	17.5	95	10.9	2.81	1.238
<b>I do not mind leaving my job even if there is no other job to go to</b>											
142	18.4	102	11.8	172	19.8	137	15.8	307	35.4	3.42	1.479
<b>At the moment staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity not choice</b>											
236	27.2	210	24.2	176	20.3	133	15.3	98	11.3	2.59	1.341
<b>The offer of more money with another employer would not make me think of changing my job</b>											
128	14.7	114	13.1	152	17.5	218	25.1	247	28.5	3.40	1.406
<b>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer</b>											
228	26.3	149	17.2	266	30.6	131	15.1	83	9.6	2.64	1.285
<b>I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now</b>											
53	6.1	88	10.1	168	19.4	188	21.7	364	41.9	3.84	1.248
<b>I feel loyal to this organisation</b>											
59	6.8	148	17.1	302	34.8	121	13.9	225	25.9	3.36	1.232
<b>I would not leave my organisation at the moment because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it</b>											
47	5.4	93	10.7	268	30.9	164	18.9	284	32.7	3.64	1.201
<b>I owe a great deal to my organisation</b>											
28	3.2	75	8.6	251	28.9	191	22.0	311	35.8	3.80	1.123
<b>I would end my employment here tomorrow given the opportunity of something different or better</b>											
283	32.6	146	16.8	233	26.8	66	7.6	125	14.4	2.54	1.396
<b>I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed</b>											
93	10.7	227	25.2	300	34.6	116	13.4	125	14.4	2.95	1.94
<b>I like the people in this call centre</b>											
294	33.9	363	41.8	178	20.5	11	1.3	15	1.7	1.94	0.868
<b>I look forward to coming to work</b>											
46	5.3	158	18.2	316	36.4	184	21.2	157	18.1	3.33	1.757

Table 6.18 indicates that feelings towards customers were generally positive, indicating lower levels of alienation with regard to customers compared with the higher levels of organisational alienation.



**Table 6.18 Subjective Aspects of Alienation at Work: Customer Identification**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I feel very loyal towards my customers</b>											
126	14.5	234	27.0	275	31.7	111	12.8	112	12.9	2.82	1.167
<b>I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work</b>											
271	31.2	261	30.1	211	24.3	73	8.4	43	5.0	2.25	1.136
<b>I do not think any differently towards my customers no matter how abusive or difficult they are</b>											
97	11.2	181	20.9	238	27.4	241	27.8	100	11.5	3.08	1.186
<b>I would treat customers better if I had more time</b>											
135	15.6	202	23.3	250	28.8	167	19.2	100	11.5	2.88	1.233
<b>I think dealing with customers is boring because you always have to say the same thing</b>											
103	11.9	164	18.9	253	29.1	206	23.7	130	15.0	3.11	1.229
<b>I always have to put on an act when speaking to customers</b>											
113	13.0	156	18.0	237	27.3	193	22.2	158	18.2	3.15	1.285
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more time</b>											
136	15.7	163	18.8	262	30.2	193	22.2	103	11.9	2.96	1.237
<b>Customers are sometimes so difficult, it makes my job unpleasant</b>											
193	22.2	282	32.5	252	29.0	76	8.8	55	6.3	2.44	1.122

Table 6.19 summarises all the items for the ‘alienation’ construct. While alienation levels concerning some work characteristics, pressure and organisational were relatively high, positive feelings towards the customer indicate low levels of alienation and this is reflected in the compounded scores. Significant here is the large number and percentage of respondents who report low levels of alienation overall and only 5 per cent who experience high levels of alienation.

**Table 6.19 Alienation: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
0	0	47	5.4	623	71.8	198	22.8	0	0	3.17	.502

### 6.3.6 Commitment: Work and Organisation

Tables 6.20, 6.21 and 6.22 describe attitudes towards commitment with regard to work, organisational and senior management in an organisation-wide context.



**Work**

Table 6.20 describes work-related items comprising team members, local management and customers, the latter two of which are also considered in greater detail in Tables 6.23, 6.24 and 6.25. Of the three items concerning team members, local management and customers, respondents indicated strong commitment to team members only.

**Table 6.20 Attitudes Towards Commitment: Work - Related Factors**

Strongly dislike		Dislike		Neutral		Like		Like strongly		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I like my team members/fellow workers</b>											
4	0.5	18	2.1	102	11.8	415	47.8	329	37.9	4.21	0.761
<b>I like the management here</b>											
62	7.1	101	11.6	426	49.1	242	27.9	65	7.5	3.10	0.912
<b>I like the customers/clients</b>											
81	9.3	150	17.3	521	60.0	111	12.8	4	0.5	2.78	0.803

**Organisation**

With regard to organisational commitment (Table 6.21) only two items – knowing the values of the organisation and sharing those values - demonstrated marginally positive commitment.

**Table 6.21 Attitudes towards Commitment: Organisational Factors**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am proud to tell people I work for my organisation</b>											
86	9.9	189	21.8	279	32.1	130	15.0	181	20.9	3.15	1.258
<b>I know the values of my organisation</b>											
172	19.8	238	27.4	221	25.5	85	9.8	147	16.9	2.76	1.341
<b>I share the values of my organisation</b>											
106	12.2	199	22.9	283	32.6	101	11.6	173	19.9	3.04	1.282
<b>I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation</b>											
75	8.6	89	10.3	233	26.8	158	18.2	308	35.5	3.62	1.296
<b>I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation</b>											
173	19.9	185	21.3	237	27.3	158	18.2	107	12.3	2.82	1.292
<b>I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation</b>											
156	18.0	193	22.2	265	30.5	152	17.5	95	10.9	2.81	1.238
<b>I do not mind leaving my job even if there is no other job to go to</b>											
142	18.4	102	11.8	172	19.8	137	15.8	307	35.4	3.42	1.479
<b>At the moment staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity not choice</b>											



<b>Table 6.21 Attitudes towards Commitment: Organisational Factors</b>											
236	27.2	210	24.2	176	20.3	133	15.3	98	11.3	2.59	1.341
<b>I would not leave this organisation because too much personal sacrifice and would lose benefits</b>											
62	7.1	171	19.7	344	39.6	150	17.3	130	15.0	3.13	1.120
<b>The offer of more money with another employer would not make me think of changing my job</b>											
128	14.7	114	13.1	152	17.5	218	25.1	247	28.5	3.40	1.406
<b>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer</b>											
228	26.3	149	17.2	266	30.6	131	15.1	83	9.6	2.64	1.285
<b>Even if it were to my advantage I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now</b>											
57	6.6	67	7.7	222	25.6	188	21.7	320	36.9	3.76	1.222
<b>I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now</b>											
53	6.1	88	10.1	168	19.4	188	21.7	364	41.9	3.84	1.248
<b>I feel loyal to this organisation</b>											
59	6.8	148	17.1	302	34.8	121	13.9	225	25.9	3.36	1.232
<b>I would not leave my organisation at the moment because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it</b>											
47	5.4	93	10.7	268	30.9	164	18.9	284	32.7	3.64	1.201
<b>I owe a great deal to my organisation</b>											
28	3.2	75	8.6	251	28.9	191	22.0	311	35.8	3.80	1.123
<b>I sometimes feel like leaving this employment for good</b>											
222	25.6	185	21.3	193	22.2	128	14.7	129	14.9	2.72	1.388
<b>I would end my employment here tomorrow given the opportunity of something different or better</b>											
283	32.6	146	16.8	233	26.8	66	7.6	125	14.4	2.54	1.396
<b>I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed</b>											
93	10.7	227	25.2	300	34.6	116	13.4	125	14.4	2.95	1.94
<b>I would take almost any job to keep working for this organisation</b>											
34	3.9	73	8.4	238	27.4	172	19.8	342	39.4	3.83	1.160

Tables 6.23, 6.24 and 6.25 are conceptual diagrams that show the relationships between the variables.

### Senior Management

Respondents demonstrated an absence of commitment to 'senior management' in relation to feelings of remoteness, lack of communication and lack of concern for what employees are doing (Table 6.22). On the other hand there was a desire on the part of respondents to learn more about the activities of senior management.

With regard to relations with local management, the respondents' responses were mixed such as whether managers treat employees fairly, whether managers listen to employees' suggestions and deal with employee problems, whether managers inform employees about proposed workplace changes and whether managers help develop skills and encourage employees to meet their family responsibilities. The results provide a marginally negative to neutral view of local management indicating low levels of commitment relating to many items. The negatively viewed items comprise 'remoteness', 'responsibility', 'regulations',



**Table 6.22 Attitudes towards Commitment: Senior Management and Call Centre Issues**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I know who the top managers of my organisation are</b>											
206	23.7	195	22.5	92	9.9	108	12.4	259	29.8	3.02	1.587
<b>I feel that top management appreciate the concerns of ordinary employees</b>											
74	8.5	86	9.9	210	24.2	202	23.3	285	32.8	3.63	1.273
<b>I think that top management are too remote</b>											
284	32.7	169	19.5	253	29.1	67	7.7	82	9.4	2.41	1.281
<b>I do not think top management communicate enough with ordinary employees</b>											
317	36.5	201	23.2	159	18.3	74	8.5	106	12.2	2.36	3.74
<b>I do not think it is any of my business to know what top management are doing</b>											
52	6.9	93	10.7	179	20.6	236	27.2	300	34.6	3.74	1.212
<b>I care a lot about what top management are doing as it affects ordinary employees like myself</b>											
258	29.7	215	24.8	244	28.1	61	7.0	81	9.3	2.41	1.246
<b>I look forward to coming to work</b>											
46	5.3	158	18.2	316	36.4	184	21.2	157	18.1	3.33	1.757
<b>I would not work anywhere else but in this call centre</b>											
26	3.0	51	5.9	160	18.4	207	23.8	415	47.8	4.09	1.083

### 6.3.7 Commitment to Local Management, Team Management and Customer

Tables 6.23, 6.24 and 6.25 are concerned with the extent to which call centre workers view their relationships, in terms of commitment, with local call centre management, their team leaders / managers and customers.

#### *Local management*

With regard to relations with local management, the commitment element relates to issues such as whether managers treat employees fairly; whether management respond to suggestions and deal with employee problems; whether management inform employees about proposed workplace changes and whether managers help develop skills and encourage employees to meet their family responsibilities. The results present a marginally negative to neutral view of local management indicating low levels of commitment relating to many items. The negatively viewed items comprise 'remoteness', responding to suggestions,



commenting and keeping employees up-to-date about proposed changes, the employment relationship, skills development and family responsibilities.

**Table 6.23 Attitudes Towards Commitment: Relations With Local Management**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I think managers treat employees fairly</b>											
100	11.5	232	26.7	237	27.3	161	18.5	126	14.5	2.98	1.231
<b>I think managers are good at dealing with problems employees may have</b>											
68	7.8	249	28.7	237	27.3	186	21.4	115	13.2	3.04	1.168
<b>I think most managers are remote and don't care about employees</b>											
75	8.6	178	20.5	240	27.6	233	26.8	130	15.0	3.19	1.184
<b>I think managers respond to suggestions from employees</b>											
54	6.2	174	20.0	291	33.5	194	22.4	144	16.6	3.23	1.140
<b>I think managers here provide everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes</b>											
40	4.6	179	20.6	252	29.0	225	25.9	158	18.2	3.33	1.137
<b>I think managers keep everyone up-to-date about proposed changes</b>											
71	8.7	196	22.6	240	27.6	188	21.7	159	18.3	3.20	1.221
<b>I think relations between managers and employees in this call centre are very good</b>											
69	7.9	194	22.4	279	32.1	169	19.5	145	16.7	3.15	1.185
<b>I think managers encourage employees to develop their skills</b>											
70	8.1	194	22.4	290	33.4	177	20.4	123	14.2	3.10	1.163
<b>I think managers are understanding about employees having to meet family responsibilities</b>											
81	9.3	170	19.6	267	30.8	153	17.6	185	21.3	3.22	1.254

*Customers*

Views of the customer relationship, as described in Table 6.25 are also largely positive, demonstrating higher levels of commitment with the exception of views concerning abusive

**Team Management**

Table 6.24 describes respondents' views of team management. Commitment to team leadership / management, in contrast to views concerning local call centre management, is viewed in a positive light with the one exception being that the team leader would not influence decisions to leave employment.



**Table 6.24 Attitudes Towards Commitment: The Team Manager/Leader**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>If it were not for my team manager I would have left this call centre by now</b>											
49	5.6	115	13.2	221	25.5	158	18.2	310	35.7	3.66	1.252
<b>My team manager motivates me to do my job</b>											
93	10.7	293	33.8	219	25.2	146	16.8	102	11.8	2.85	1.187
<b>I do not get much respect from my team manager</b>											
72	8.3	95	10.9	213	24.5	188	21.7	285	32.8	3.61	1.280
<b>My team manager is concerned about my training needs</b>											
159	18.3	291	33.5	167	19.2	145	16.7	90	10.4	2.67	1.254
<b>My team manager encourages me to develop my skills</b>											
179	20.6	297	34.2	167	19.2	145	16.7	90	10.4	2.54	1.189
<b>My team manager is concerned about my promotion prospects</b>											
100	11.5	201	23.2	256	29.5	126	14.5	54	6.2	3.07	1.281
<b>I am always kept up-to-date by my team manager about call centre matters</b>											
203	23.4	254	29.3	177	20.4	110	12.7	107	12.3	2.61	1.316
<b>My team manager is understanding about my having to meet my family responsibilities</b>											
171	19.7	208	24.0	319	36.8	91	10.5	62	7.1	2.61	1.137
<b>My team manager always gives me a chance to comment on any proposed changes affecting the call centre</b>											
141	16.2	211	24.3	256	29.5	133	15.3	109	12.6	2.83	1.247
<b>My team manager is always helpful in dealing with problems I or my team members may have</b>											
273	31.5	257	29.6	200	23.0	41	4.7	81	9.3	2.30	1.232
<b>My team manager always responds to suggestions from employees</b>											
165	19.0	260	30.0	200	23.0	41	4.7	81	9.3	2.57	1.167

Table 6.26 summarises all the items for the 'commitment' construct. The composite data indicate that overall, commitment is neutral to low with 17.6 per cent of respondents

**Customers**

Views of the customer relationship, as described in Table 6.25 are also largely positive, demonstrating higher levels of commitment with the exception of views concerning abusive and difficult customers.



**Table 6.25 Attitudes Towards Commitment: Customer Orientation**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I feel very loyal towards my customers</b>											
126	14.5	234	27.0	275	31.7	111	12.8	112	12.9	2.82	1.167
<b>I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work</b>											
271	31.2	261	30.1	211	24.3	73	8.4	43	5.0	2.25	1.136
<b>I do not think any differently towards my customers no matter how abusive or difficult they are</b>											
97	11.2	181	20.9	238	27.4	241	27.8	100	11.5	3.08	1.186
<b>I would treat customers better if I had more time</b>											
135	15.6	202	23.3	250	28.8	167	19.2	100	11.5	2.88	1.233
<b>I think dealing with customers is boring because you always have to say the same thing</b>											
103	11.9	164	18.9	253	29.1	206	23.7	130	15.0	3.11	1.229
<b>I always have to put on an act when speaking to customers</b>											
113	13.0	156	18.0	237	27.3	193	22.2	158	18.2	3.15	1.285
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more time</b>											
136	15.7	163	18.8	262	30.2	193	22.2	103	11.9	2.96	1.237
<b>Customers are sometimes so difficult, it makes my job unpleasant</b>											
193	22.2	282	32.5	252	29.0	76	8.8	55	6.3	2.44	1.122
<b>This sort of call centre gives customers a very good service</b>											
139	16.0	283	32.6	319	36.8	55	6.3	61	6.3	2.55	1.062
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more regular training</b>											
87	10.0	253	29.1	325	37.4	120	13.8	72	8.3	2.81	1.069

Table 6.26 summarises all the items for the 'commitment' construct. The composite data

indicate that overall, commitment is neutral to low with 17.6 per cent of respondents

manifesting low levels of commitment. However there is a contrast between low commitment

levels concerning organisational issues and 'top' management and relatively high levels of

commitment with regard to team management and customers.

**Table 6.26 Commitment: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
2	0.2	90	10.4	594	68.4	153	17.6	08	0.9	3.09	.572



### 6.3.8 Loyalty to Work and Organisation

Table 6.27 describes respondents' views concerning loyalty to their work and organisation.

The loyalty construct includes items which elicit views concerning the nature of respondents' attachment to certain aspects of work and organisation.

#### *Work and Organisation*

The items within Table 6.27 concerning 'liking' management and customers yielded neutral views, demonstrating a weak attachment to both. Of the 23 items describing loyalty to the wider organisation, 19 items demonstrated a weak attachment and hence low levels of loyalty. The two items concerning 'knowing and sharing the values of the organisation' yielded neutral views, while the items 'I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed' and 'I care a lot about what top management are doing as it affects ordinary employees like myself' produced positive views, largely for instrumental reasons.

**Table 6.27 Loyalty: Work and Organisational Factors**

Strongly dislike		Dislike		Neutral		Like		Like strongly		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I like the management here</b>											
62	7.1	101	11.6	426	49.1	242	27.9	65	7.5	3.10	0.912
<b>I like the customers/clients</b>											
81	9.3	150	17.3	521	60.0	111	12.8	4	0.5	2.78	0.803
Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am proud to tell people I work for my organisation</b>											
86	9.9	189	21.8	279	32.1	130	15.0	181	20.9	3.15	1.258
<b>I know the values of my organisation</b>											
172	19.8	238	27.4	221	25.5	85	9.8	147	16.9	2.76	1.341
<b>I share the values of my organisation</b>											
106	12.2	199	22.9	283	32.6	101	11.6	173	19.9	3.04	1.282
<b>I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation</b>											
75	8.6	89	10.3	233	26.8	158	18.2	308	35.5	3.62	1.296
<b>I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation</b>											
173	19.9	185	21.3	237	27.3	158	18.2	107	12.3	2.82	1.292
<b>I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation</b>											



**Table 6.27 Loyalty: Work and Organisational Factors**

156	18.0	193	22.2	265	30.5	152	17.5	95	10.9	2.81	1.238
<b>I do not mind leaving my job even if there is no other job to go to</b>											
142	18.4	102	11.8	172	19.8	137	15.8	307	35.4	3.42	1.479
<b>At the moment staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity not choice</b>											
236	27.2	210	24.2	176	20.3	133	15.3	98	11.3	2.59	1.341
<b>I would not leave this organisation because too much personal sacrifice and would lose benefits</b>											
62	7.1	171	19.7	344	39.6	150	17.3	130	15.0	3.13	1.120
<b>The offer of more money with another employer would not make me think of changing my job</b>											
128	14.7	114	13.1	152	17.5	218	25.1	247	28.5	3.40	1.406
<b>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer</b>											
228	26.3	149	17.2	266	30.6	131	15.1	83	9.6	2.64	1.285
<b>Even if it were to my advantage I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now</b>											
57	6.6	67	7.7	222	25.6	188	21.7	320	36.9	3.76	1.222
<b>I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now</b>											
53	6.1	88	10.1	168	19.4	188	21.7	364	41.9	3.84	1.248
<b>I feel loyal to this organisation</b>											
59	6.8	148	17.1	302	34.8	121	13.9	225	25.9	3.36	1.232
<b>I would not leave my organisation at the moment because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it</b>											
47	5.4	93	10.7	268	30.9	164	18.9	284	32.7	3.64	1.201
<b>I owe a great deal to my organisation</b>											
28	3.2	75	8.6	251	28.9	191	22.0	311	35.8	3.80	1.123
<b>I sometimes feel like leaving this employment for good</b>											
222	25.6	185	21.3	193	22.2	128	14.7	129	14.9	2.72	1.388
<b>I would end my employment here tomorrow given the opportunity of something different or better</b>											
283	32.6	146	16.8	233	26.8	66	7.6	125	14.4	2.54	1.396
<b>I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed</b>											
93	10.7	227	25.2	300	34.6	116	13.4	125	14.4	2.95	1.94
<b>I would take almost any job to keep working for this organisation</b>											
34	3.9	73	8.4	238	27.4	172	19.8	342	39.4	3.83	1.160
<b>I care a lot about what top management are doing as it affects ordinary employees like myself</b>											
258	29.7	215	24.8	244	28.1	61	7.0	81	9.3	2.41	1.246
<b>I look forward to coming to work</b>											
46	5.3	158	18.2	316	36.4	184	21.2	157	18.1	3.33	1.757
<b>I would not work anywhere else but in this call centre</b>											
26	3.0	51	5.9	160	18.4	207	23.8	415	47.8	4.09	1.083

'high' loyalty levels and category 5 indicating 'low' loyalty levels. The summary data shows

### **Local Management, Team and Customers**

Of the items describing attachment and loyalty to local management (Table 6.28) only three –

‘I get on well with management....’; ‘I think managers treat employees fairly’; and ‘I think

most managers are remote’ yielded positive views with the remaining seven items

demonstrating relatively low loyalty levels and weak attachment. The results also

demonstrate high loyalty levels towards the team but low levels towards team managers. The

two items describing customers also produced high loyalty levels.



**Table 6.28 Loyalty: Call Centre Management, Team and Customer Relations**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I get on well with managers in this call/contact centre</b>											
137	15.8	241	27.8	269	31.0	123	14.2	85	9.8	2.74	1.183
<b>I think managers treat employees fairly</b>											
100	11.5	232	26.7	237	27.3	161	18.5	126	14.5	2.98	1.231
<b>I think managers are good at dealing with problems employees may have</b>											
68	7.8	249	28.7	237	27.3	186	21.4	115	13.2	3.04	1.168
<b>I think most managers are remote and don't care about employees</b>											
75	8.6	178	20.5	240	27.6	233	26.8	130	15.0	3.19	1.184
<b>I think managers respond to suggestions from employees</b>											
54	6.2	174	20.0	291	33.5	194	22.4	144	16.6	3.23	1.140
<b>I think managers here provide everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes</b>											
40	4.6	179	20.6	252	29.0	225	25.9	158	18.2	3.33	1.137
<b>I think managers keep everyone up-to-date about proposed changes</b>											
71	8.7	196	22.6	240	27.6	188	21.7	159	18.3	3.20	1.221
<b>I think relations between managers and employees in this call centre are very good</b>											
69	7.9	194	22.4	279	32.1	169	19.5	145	16.7	3.15	1.185
<b>I think managers encourage employees to develop their skills</b>											
70	8.1	194	22.4	290	33.4	177	20.4	123	14.2	3.10	1.163
<b>I think managers are understanding about employees having to meet family responsibilities</b>											
81	9.3	170	19.6	267	30.8	153	17.6	185	21.3	3.22	1.254
<b>I feel loyal to my team</b>											
292	33.6	267	30.8	209	24.1	65	7.5	22	2.5	2.13	1.051
<b>If it were not for my team manager I would have left this call centre by now</b>											
49	5.6	115	13.2	221	25.5	158	18.2	310	35.7	3.66	1.252
<b>I feel very loyal towards my customers</b>											
126	14.5	234	27.0	275	31.7	111	12.8	112	12.9	2.82	1.167
<b>I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work</b>											
271	31.2	261	30.1	211	24.3	73	8.4	43	5.0	2.25	1.136

Table 6.29 summarises all the items for the 'loyalty' construct with category 1 indicating 'high' loyalty levels and category 5 indicating 'low' loyalty levels. The summary data shows that overall, loyalty levels are low.

**Table 6.29 Loyalty: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
2	0.2	99	11.4	526	60.6	215	24.8	26	3.0	3.19	.675



### 6.3.9 Customer Interaction

Table 6.31 summarises all the items for the 'quality of customer interaction' construct. The eleven items within Table 6.30 describe the quality of customer interaction. The positive composite data reveal that the quality of customer interaction is mainly neutral or moderate. Aspects of respondents' interaction with customers include strong feelings of loyalty towards customers; high concern for customer satisfaction; that customers would be given better service if workers had more interaction time; providing a good service for customers and providing a better service if more regular training was available. The items that yield neutral responses include feelings concerning 'liking' customers.

#### 6.3.10 Satisfaction with Leader and Local Management

**Table 6.30 Quality of Customer Interaction: Attitudes Towards Customers**

Strongly dislike		Dislike		Neutral		Like		Like strongly		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I like the customers/clients</b>											
81	9.3	150	17.3	521	60.0	111	12.8	4	0.5	2.78	0.803
A great deal		To some extent		Not much		Not at all		Does not apply		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am pressured by difficult customers</b>											
275	31.7	324	37.3	177	20.4	67	7.7	22	2.5	2.12	1.024
Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I feel very loyal towards my customers</b>											
126	14.5	234	27.0	275	31.7	111	12.8	112	12.9	2.82	1.167
<b>I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work</b>											
271	31.2	261	30.1	211	24.3	73	8.4	43	5.0	2.25	1.136
<b>I do not think any differently towards my customers no matter how abusive or difficult they are</b>											
97	11.2	181	20.9	238	27.4	241	27.8	100	11.5	3.08	1.186
<b>I would treat customers better if I had more time</b>											
135	15.6	202	23.3	250	28.8	167	19.2	100	11.5	2.88	1.233
<b>I think dealing with customers is boring because you always have to say the same thing</b>											
103	11.9	164	18.9	253	29.1	206	23.7	130	15.0	3.11	1.229
<b>I always have to put on an act when speaking to customers</b>											
113	13.0	156	18.0	237	27.3	193	22.2	158	18.2	3.15	1.285
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more time</b>											
136	15.7	163	18.8	262	30.2	193	22.2	103	11.9	2.96	1.237
<b>Customers are sometimes so difficult, it makes my job unpleasant</b>											
193	22.2	282	32.5	252	29.0	76	8.8	55	6.3	2.44	1.122
<b>This sort of call centre gives customers a very good service</b>											
139	16.0	283	32.6	319	36.8	55	6.3	61	6.3	2.55	1.062
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more regular training</b>											
87	10.0	253	29.1	325	37.4	120	13.8	72	8.3	2.81	1.069



Table 6.31 summarises all the items for the ‘quality of customer interaction’ construct. The composite data reveal that the quality of customer interaction is mainly neutral or moderate.

**Table 6.31 Quality of Customer Interaction: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
2	0.2	112	12.9	601	69.2	149	17.2	4	0.5	3.05	.571

### 6.3.10 Satisfaction with Leader and Local Management

Table 6.32 contains 25 items relating to satisfaction with team leaders and local call centre-based management. Of the 11 items concerning local management, only two items are favourable with 35.4 and 18.7 per cent of respondents liking and disliking management respectively. The second favourable item suggests that around 42 per cent of respondents claim to get on well with local management. The responses to the remaining nine items indicate varying levels of dissatisfaction with local management. Of the 13 items relating to team leaders, 11 items demonstrate varying degrees of satisfaction with team leaders, the exceptions being the lack of influence by team leaders in determining decisions to leave employment and the negative impact upon respondents of being ‘pressurised’ by team leaders.

**Table 6.32 Attitudes towards Team Leader and Local Management**

Very satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Satisfied with the encouragement I get from my supervisor/team manager</b>											
197	22.7	286	32.9	177	20.4	149	17.2	59	6.8	2.52	1.207
Strongly dislike		Dislike		Neutral		Like		Like strongly		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I like the management here</b>											
62	7.1	101	11.6	426	49.1	242	27.9	65	7.5	3.10	0.912
A great deal		To some extent		Not much		Not at all		Does not apply		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am pressured by my supervisor/team leader</b>											



**Table 6.32 Attitudes towards Team Leader and Local Management**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
124	14.3	180	20.7	341	39.3	195	22.5	24	2.8	2.79	1.037
<b>I get on well with managers in this call/contact centre</b>											
137	15.8	241	27.8	269	31.0	123	14.2	85	9.8	2.74	1.183
<b>I think managers treat employees fairly</b>											
100	11.5	232	26.7	237	27.3	161	18.5	126	14.5	2.98	1.231
<b>I think managers are good at dealing with problems employees may have</b>											
68	7.8	249	28.7	237	27.3	186	21.4	115	13.2	3.04	1.168
<b>I think most managers are remote and don't care about employees</b>											
75	8.6	178	20.5	240	27.6	233	26.8	130	15.0	3.19	1.184
<b>I think managers respond to suggestions from employees</b>											
54	6.2	174	20.0	291	33.5	194	22.4	144	16.6	3.23	1.140
<b>I think managers here provide everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes</b>											
40	4.6	179	20.6	252	29.0	225	25.9	158	18.2	3.33	1.137
<b>I think managers keep everyone up-to-date about proposed changes</b>											
71	8.7	196	22.6	240	27.6	188	21.7	159	18.3	3.20	1.221
<b>I think relations between managers and employees in this call centre are very good</b>											
69	7.9	194	22.4	279	32.1	169	19.5	145	16.7	3.15	1.185
<b>I think managers encourage employees to develop their skills</b>											
70	8.1	194	22.4	290	33.4	177	20.4	123	14.2	3.10	1.163
<b>I think managers are understanding about employees having to meet family responsibilities</b>											
81	9.3	170	19.6	267	30.8	153	17.6	185	21.3	3.22	1.254
<b>I think the team is only as good as the leader</b>											
112	12.9	180	20.7	257	29.6	135	15.6	167	19.2	3.08	1.295
<b>If it were not for my team manager I would have left this call centre by now</b>											
49	5.6	115	13.2	221	25.5	158	18.2	310	35.7	3.66	1.252
<b>My team manager motivates me to do my job</b>											
93	10.7	293	33.8	219	25.2	146	16.8	102	11.8	2.85	1.187
<b>I do not get much respect from my team manager</b>											
72	8.3	95	10.9	213	24.5	188	21.7	285	32.8	3.61	1.280
<b>My team manager is concerned about my training needs</b>											
159	18.3	291	33.5	167	19.2	145	16.7	90	10.4	2.67	1.254
<b>My team manager encourages me to develop my skills</b>											
179	20.6	297	34.2	167	19.2	145	16.7	90	10.4	2.54	1.189
<b>My team manager is concerned about my promotion prospects</b>											
100	11.5	201	23.2	256	29.5	126	14.5	54	6.2	3.07	1.281
<b>I am always kept up-to-date by my team manager about call centre matters</b>											
203	23.4	254	29.3	177	20.4	110	12.7	107	12.3	2.61	1.316
<b>My team manager is understanding about my having to meet my family responsibilities</b>											
171	19.7	208	24.0	319	36.8	91	10.5	62	7.1	2.61	1.137
<b>My team manager always gives me a chance to comment on any proposed changes affecting the call centre</b>											
141	16.2	211	24.3	256	29.5	133	15.3	109	12.6	2.83	1.247
<b>My team manager is always helpful in dealing with problems I or my team members may have</b>											
273	31.5	257	29.6	200	23.0	41	4.7	81	9.3	2.30	1.232
<b>My team manager always responds to suggestions from employees</b>											
165	19.0	260	30.0	200	23.0	41	4.7	81	9.3	2.57	1.167



Table 6.33 summarises all the items for the ‘satisfaction with leader’ construct. Overall, the summary data indicates that satisfaction is neither very high nor very low, with 50.5 per cent of respondents having neutral opinions.

**Table 6.33 Satisfaction with Leader: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
12	1.4	257	29.6	438	50.5	122	14.1	39	4.5	2.91	.815

### 6.3.11 Employee Control over Work Operations

Table 6.34 indicates the extent to which workers exert control over their work. There are three items where the responses show that employees have a moderately high degree of control over work operations. 42.5 per cent of respondents disagree with the statement that they never seem to have enough time to perform their job while 47 per cent disagree that they need more skills to perform the job effectively. The third item indicates that 50.5 per cent of respondents are satisfied with the extent to which they are left alone to get on with the job.

The remaining seven items show negative or marginally negative responses indicating lower levels of control over work.

**Table 6.34 Attitudes towards Control over Work Operations**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I never seem to have enough time to get my job done</b>											
103	11.9	182	21.0	211	24.3	212	24.4	157	18.1	3.16	1.278
<b>I need more skills to do my job effectively</b>											
28	3.2	206	23.7	224	25.8	252	29.0	156	18.0	3.35	1.122
<b>My job would benefit from being multi-skilled</b>											
189	21.8	231	26.6	251	28.9	119	13.7	77	8.9	2.61	1.218



**Table 6.34 Attitudes towards Control over Work Operations**

Very satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Satisfied with the amount of influence over my job</b>											
37	4.3	169	19.5	350	40.3	246	28.3	65	7.5	3.15	0.963
<b>Satisfied with the sense of achievement I get from my job</b>											
44	5.1	221	25.5	278	32.0	256	29.5	69	7.9	3.10	1.030
<b>Satisfied with how much variety I have in doing my job</b>											
44	5.1	128	14.7	227	26.2	287	33.1	182	21.0	3.50	1.127
<b>Satisfied with the extent to which I am left alone to get on with the job</b>											
161	18.5	278	32.0	210	24.2	139	16.0	76	8.8	2.64	1.206
A lot		Some		A little		None		Don't know		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How much influence on the range of tasks I do in my job</b>											
72	8.3	187	21.5	198	22.8	392	45.2	19	2.2	3.11	1.037
<b>How much influence over the pace at which I work</b>											
123	14.2	231	26.6	158	18.2	332	38.2	23	2.6	2.89	1.145
<b>How much influence I have on how I do my work</b>											
132	15.2	238	27.4	247	28.5	226	26.0	25	2.9	2.74	1.092

Table 6.35 summarises all the items for the ‘control over work operations’ construct. The composite scores indicate that overall levels of control over work operations for the majority of respondents are neither very high nor very low with 51.5 per cent of respondents in the neutral category 3.

**Table 6.35 Control over Work Operations: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
12	1.4	257	29.6	438	50.5	122	14.1	39	4.5	2.91	.815

### 6.3.12 Management and Technological Control

Table 6.36 provides respondent views concerning management and technological control.

Eleven of the seventeen items scored highly on the two scales indicating that for these items, respondents experience relatively high levels of control. Only one item: ‘I am pressured by



my supervisor/team leader' indicates low levels of control. The remaining items elicited responses suggesting moderate levels of control.

**Table 6.36 Attitudes towards Management and Technological Control**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>There is a lot of pressure on me to make/take as many calls as possible</b>											
356	41.0	255	29.4	149	17.2	55	6.3	49	5.6	2.06	1.161
<b>I do not like my calls being monitored</b>											
174	20.0	211	24.3	289	33.3	103	11.9	89	10.3	2.68	1.215
<b>I think there is too much control over the way I work</b>											
181	20.9	217	25.0	260	30.0	157	18.1	49	5.6	2.63	1.166
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more time</b>											
136	15.7	163	18.8	262	30.2	193	22.2	103	11.9	2.96	1.237
A great deal		To some extent		Not much		Not at all		Does not apply		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am pressured by targets</b>											
307	35.4	360	41.5	164	18.9	26	3.0	11	1.3	1.93	0.879
<b>I am pressured by having my calls taped</b>											
221	25.5	246	28.3	287	33.1	85	9.8	26	3.0	2.36	1.058
<b>I am pressured by the repetitiveness of calls made</b>											
247	28.5	321	37.0	238	27.4	47	5.4	11	1.3	2.14	0.936
<b>I am pressured by not having enough time between calls</b>											
286	32.9	313	36.1	185	21.3	63	7.3	18	2.1	2.09	1.008
<b>I am pressured by having to keep to a script</b>											
173	19.9	232	26.7	250	28.8	127	14.6	84	9.7	2.67	1.223
<b>I am pressured by difficult customers</b>											
275	31.7	324	37.3	177	20.4	67	7.7	22	2.5	2.12	1.024
<b>I am pressured by my supervisor/team leader</b>											
124	14.3	180	20.7	341	39.3	195	22.5	24	2.8	2.79	1.037
<b>I am pressured by too few breaks</b>											
193	22.2	267	30.8	214	24.7	161	18.5	32	3.7	2.51	1.136
<b>I am pressured by breaks being too short</b>											
240	27.6	281	32.4	172	19.8	145	16.7	29	3.3	2.36	1.149
<b>I am pressured by computer monitoring</b>											
175	20.2	166	19.1	306	35.3	175	20.2	43	5.0	2.71	1.148
<b>I am pressured because there is not enough time to talk to colleagues</b>											
205	23.6	177	20.4	309	35.6	140	16.1	35	4.0	2.56	1.134
<b>I am pressured by the monotony of the job</b>											
303	34.9	237	27.3	201	23.2	95	10.9	27	3.1	2.20	1.127
<b>I am pressured because I always have to put on an act when on the 'phone</b>											
153	17.6	245	28.2	252	29.0	140	16.1	64	7.4	2.67	3.15

Table 6.37 summarises all the items for the 'management and technological control'

construct. The summary data show that 37.8 per cent of respondents experience high control levels for all items.



**Table 6.37 Management and Technological Control: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
0	0	328	37.8	512	59.0	28	3.2	0	0	2.65	.539

**6.3.13 Satisfaction and Work**

Table 6.38, containing 29 items, considers satisfaction in relation to different aspects of respondents' work situation. Respondents identify varying degrees of dissatisfaction concerning 17 items including the requirement to work hard, pressure to make or take calls, calls being monitored; too much management and technological control over work, lack of variety, pay, bonuses and fringe benefits. Respondents are satisfied or marginally satisfied in relation to ten items, in particular to those items concerning team and team leader relationships.

**Table 6.38 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Work-Related Characteristics**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>My job requires that I work very hard</b>											
266	30.6	266	30.6	202	23.3	89	10.3	44	5.1	2.28	1.152
<b>I never seem to have enough time to get my job done</b>											
103	11.9	182	21.0	211	24.3	212	24.4	157	18.1	3.16	1.278
<b>There is a lot of pressure on me to make/take as many calls as possible</b>											
356	41.0	255	29.4	149	17.2	55	6.3	49	5.6	2.06	1.161
<b>I do not like my calls being monitored</b>											
174	20.0	211	24.3	289	33.3	103	11.9	89	10.3	2.68	1.215
<b>I feel my job is secure in this call/contact centre</b>											
111	12.8	225	25.9	246	28.3	140	16.1	142	16.4	2.97	1.263
<b>I am very satisfied with my job</b>											
77	8.9	210	24.2	257	29.6	178	20.5	144	16.6	3.12	1.207
<b>I would recommend this job to a friend</b>											
108	12.4	254	29.3	205	23.6	162	18.7	137	15.8	2.96	1.270
<b>I worry a lot about my job</b>											
45	5.2	88	10.1	290	33.4	236	27.2	208	24.0	3.55	1.115
<b>I think there is too much control over the way I work</b>											
181	20.9	217	25.0	260	30.0	157	18.1	49	5.6	2.63	1.166



**Table 6.38 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Work-Related Characteristics**

<b>I think there is a lot of scope for promotion</b>											
76	8.8	187	21.5	233	26.8	186	21.4	184	21.2	3.25	1.254
<b>Very satisfied</b>		<b>Satisfied</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Dissatisfied</b>		<b>Very dissatisfied</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>Satisfied with the amount of influence over my job</b>											
37	4.3	169	19.5	350	40.3	246	28.3	65	7.5	3.15	0.963
<b>Satisfied with the sense of achievement I get from my job</b>											
44	5.1	221	25.5	278	32.0	256	29.5	69	7.9	3.10	1.030
<b>Satisfied with how much variety I have in doing my job</b>											
44	5.1	128	14.7	227	26.2	287	33.1	182	21.0	3.50	1.127
<b>Satisfied with the extent to which I am left alone to get on with the job</b>											
161	18.5	278	32.0	210	24.2	139	16.0	76	8.8	2.64	1.206
<b>Satisfied with the encouragement I get from my supervisor/team leader</b>											
197	22.7	286	32.9	177	20.4	149	17.2	59	6.8	2.52	1.207
<b>Satisfied with the amount of pay I receive</b>											
34	3.9	193	22.2	203	23.4	282	32.5	155	17.9	3.38	1.129
<b>Satisfied with the appreciation I get from my fellow teamworkers/colleagues</b>											
142	16.4	268	30.9	251	28.9	135	15.6	72	8.3	2.69	1.163
<b>A lot</b>		<b>Some</b>		<b>A little</b>		<b>None</b>		<b>Don't know</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>How much influence on the range of tasks I do in my job</b>											
72	8.3	187	21.5	198	22.8	392	45.2	19	2.2	3.11	1.037
<b>How much influence over the pace at which I work</b>											
123	14.2	231	26.6	158	18.2	332	38.2	23	2.6	3.11	1.037
<b>How much influence I have on how I do my work</b>											
132	15.2	238	27.4	247	28.5	226	26.0	25	2.9	2.74	1.092
<b>Strongly dislike</b>		<b>Dislike</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Like</b>		<b>Like strongly</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>I like my team members/fellow workers</b>											
4	0.5	18	2.1	102	11.8	415	47.8	329	37.9	4.21	0.761
<b>I like the hours</b>											
107	12.3	231	26.6	231	26.6	252	29.0	47	5.4	2.89	1.120
<b>I like my job</b>											
51	5.9	188	21.7	332	38.2	262	30.2	33	3.8	3.04	0.952
<b>I like my pay</b>											
180	20.7	244	28.1	264	30.4	159	18.3	19	2.2	2.53	1.079
<b>I like my bonuses</b>											
245	28.2	152	17.5	230	26.5	187	21.5	48	5.5	2.58	1.257
<b>I like my fringe benefits</b>											
198	22.8	121	13.9	360	41.5	131	15.1	51	5.9	2.67	1.159
<b>I like the management here</b>											
62	7.1	101	11.6	426	49.1	242	27.9	34	3.9	3.10	0.912
<b>I like the physical conditions (layout of desks etc)</b>											
82	9.4	172	19.8	317	36.5	231	26.6	65	7.5	3.03	1.069
<b>I like the customer/clients</b>											
81	9.3	150	17.3	521	60.0	111	12.8	4	0.5	2.78	0.803



### 6.3.14 Satisfaction and Job pressure

Table 6.39 provides respondent views concerning job pressure. Ten of the eleven items scored highly on the scale indicating that for these items, respondents experience relatively high levels of pressure, and by inference, low levels of satisfaction. The items which are particularly characterised by high pressure levels include 'pressured by targets' (76.9 per cent); 'pressured by difficult customers' (69 per cent) 'pressured by the repetitiveness of calls made' (65.5 per cent) and 'pressured by monitoring' (62.2 per cent). Only one item: 'I am pressured by my supervisor/team leader' indicates low levels of pressure.

**Table 6.39 Satisfaction: Attitudes Towards Job-Related Pressure**

A great deal		To some extent		Not much		Not at all		Does not apply		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am pressured by targets</b>											
307	35.4	360	41.5	164	18.9	26	3.0	11	1.3	1.93	0.879
<b>I am pressured by having my calls taped</b>											
221	25.5	246	28.3	287	33.1	85	9.8	26	3.0	2.36	1.058
<b>I am pressured by the repetitiveness of calls made</b>											
247	28.5	321	37.0	238	27.4	47	5.4	11	1.3	2.14	0.936
<b>I am pressured by not having enough time between calls</b>											
286	32.9	313	36.1	185	21.3	63	7.3	18	2.1	2.09	1.008
<b>I am pressured by having to keep to a script</b>											
173	19.9	232	26.7	250	28.8	127	14.6	84	9.7	2.67	1.223
<b>I am pressured by difficult customers</b>											
275	31.7	324	37.3	177	20.4	67	7.7	22	2.5	2.12	1.024
<b>I am pressured by my supervisor/team leader</b>											
124	14.3	180	20.7	341	39.3	195	22.5	24	2.8	2.79	1.037
<b>I am pressured by too few breaks</b>											
193	22.2	267	30.8	214	24.7	161	18.5	32	3.7	2.51	1.136
<b>I am pressured by breaks being too short</b>											
240	27.6	281	32.4	172	19.8	145	16.7	29	3.3	2.36	1.149
<b>I am pressured by computer monitoring</b>											
175	20.2	166	19.1	306	35.3	175	20.2	43	5.0	2.71	1.148
<b>I am pressured because there is not enough time to talk to colleagues</b>											
205	23.6	177	20.4	309	35.6	140	16.1	35	4.0	2.56	1.134
<b>I am pressured by the monotony of the job</b>											
303	34.9	237	27.3	201	23.2	95	10.9	27	3.1	2.20	1.127
<b>I am pressured because I always have to put on an act when on the 'phone</b>											
153	17.6	245	28.2	252	29.0	140	16.1	64	7.4	2.67	3.15



### 6.3.15 Satisfaction and HRM Practices

Tables 6.40, 6.41 and 6.42 contain 30 items which describe satisfaction linked to HRM practices. Tables 6.40 and 6.41 describe ten items which are concerned with consultation and related issues. Table 6.42 contains 20 items dealing with skills and training.

#### *Consultation and Related Issues*

The findings from Tables 6.40 and 6.41 indicate an absence of consultation with regard to eliciting workers' views on future plans, staffing and redundancy, changes to work procedures, pay issues and health and safety. However, responses were marginally positive concerning dealing with work-related problems, fair treatment and keeping CSRs informed (but not consulted) about proposed changes in the workplace.

Table 6.42 describes the items concerned with skills and training. Table 6.42 indicates awareness among employees of different types of skills

**Table 6.40 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Consultation**

Frequently		Sometimes		Hardly ever		Never		Don't know		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on future plans for the workplace?</b>											
74	8.5	225	25.9	202	23.3	332	38.2	31	3.6	2.75	1.021
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on staffing issues including redundancy?</b>											
32	3.7	149	17.2	239	27.5	408	47.0	37	4.3	2.82	1.017
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on changes to work practices?</b>											
88	10.1	225	25.9	209	24.1	334	38.5	9	1.0	2.67	0.985
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on pay issues?</b>											
43	5.0	150	17.3	250	28.8	403	46.4	17	2.0	2.76	0.990
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on health and safety at work?</b>											
56	6.5	181	20.9	259	29.8	352	40.6	15	1.7	2.80	0.999



**Table 6.41 Satisfaction: HR Practices and Communication**

Very good		Good		Neutral		Poor		Very poor		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How good are managers and leaders at dealing with work problems you or others may have?</b>											
84	9.7	280	32.3	232	26.7	167	19.2	103	11.9	2.91	1.172
<b>How good are managers at treating employees fairly?</b>											
105	12.1	318	36.6	206	23.7	167	19.2	103	11.9	2.79	1.204
<b>How good are managers and leaders at providing everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes?</b>											
67	7.7	234	27.0	228	26.3	193	22.2	144	16.6	3.13	1.205
<b>How good are managers and leaders at keeping everyone up-to-date about proposed changes?</b>											
134	15.4	243	28.0	205	23.6	203	23.4	81	9.3	2.83	1.217
<b>How good are managers and leaders at responding to suggestions from employees?</b>											
80	9.2	176	20.3	272	31.3	180	18.3	159	18.3	3.19	1.217

**Skills and Training**

Table 6.42 describes the items concerned with skills and training. With regard to skills and training, Table 6.42 indicates awareness amongst respondents that different types of skills concerning the job, customers, products and services are important but that the quality of skills training and the frequency of skills training are deficient, particularly with regard to the need for more training after the initial training period and more time spent on staff training generally.



**Table 6.42: Satisfaction: Skills and Training**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>My job does not require many skills</b>											
89	10.3	269	31.0	144	16.6	234	27.0	132	15.2	3.06	1.263
<b>I need more skills to do my job effectively</b>											
28	3.2	206	23.7	224	25.8	252	29.0	156	18.0	3.35	1.122
<b>My job would benefit from being multi-skilled</b>											
189	21.8	231	26.6	251	28.9	119	13.7	77	8.9	2.61	1.218
<b>If I were more skilled I would be more interested in my job</b>											
99	11.4	239	27.5	249	28.7	143	16.5	123	14.2	2.94	1.220
<b>Verbal skills concerning customers are important for my job</b>											
446	51.4	215	24.8	126	14.5	31	3.6	47	5.4	1.86	1.130
<b>More knowledge of the type of customer I am dealing with is important for my job</b>											
302	34.8	265	30.5	225	25.9	44	5.1	30	3.5	2.12	1.054
<b>Knowledge of the product(s) and service(s) I am dealing with is important for my job</b>											
349	40.2	269	31.0	165	19.0	58	6.7	26	3.0	2.01	1.064
<b>More familiarity with the hardware and software that I am using is important for my job</b>											
326	37.6	281	32.4	187	21.5	43	5.0	29	3.3	2.04	1.045
<b>I get enough training to do my job well</b>											
135	15.6	293	33.8	238	27.4	140	16.1	60	6.9	2.65	1.131
<b>I do not get enough training after my initial training period</b>											
134	15.4	337	38.8	221	25.5	110	12.7	61	7.0	2.57	1.112
<b>My organisation should spend more time and effort on training its staff</b>											
231	26.6	243	28.0	237	27.3	105	12.1	50	5.8	2.42	1.170
<b>The training I do get is of a high standard</b>											
137	15.6	205	23.6	308	35.5	127	14.6	88	10.1	2.80	1.177
<b>The training I get leaves a lot to be desired</b>											
164	18.9	174	20.0	274	31.6	178	20.5	75	8.6	2.80	1.214
<b>During the past 12 months I have received no training</b>											
89	10.3	100	11.5	205	23.6	151	17.4	308	35.5	3.57	1.353
<b>During the past 12 months I have received less than 1 days training</b>											
90	10.4	71	8.2	203	23.4	111	12.8	381	42.8	3.73	1.374
<b>During the past 12 months I have received 1-2 days training</b>											
101	11.6	71	8.2	224	25.8	85	9.8	372	42.9	3.65	1.408
<b>During the past 12 months I have received 2-5 days training</b>											
146	16.8	121	13.9	184	21.2	67	7.7	331	38.1	3.37	1.353
<b>During the past 12 months I have received 5-10 days training</b>											
118	13.6	63	7.3	207	23.8	97	11.2	364	41.9	3.62	1.442
<b>During the past 12 months I have received 10 days or more of training</b>											
100	11.5	76	8.8	220	25.3	87	10.0	366	42.2	3.64	1.407
<b>During the past 6 months I have received up to 10 days or more of training</b>											
150	17.3	44	5.1	214	24.7	81	9.3	296	34.1	3.42	1.503



### 6.3.16 Satisfaction: Personal, Physical and Team Characteristics

Table 6.43 contains items which describe satisfaction with regard to personal, physical and team issues. Respondents indicate that they are satisfied or very satisfied with regard to 13, nine of which are concerned with team characteristics. Respondents are also satisfied with the call centre as a pleasant place to work in and with the people (both managers and team workers) they interact with. The principal items which recorded dissatisfaction levels include call centre work as the only work option and the choice – if there were one - to work elsewhere.

**Table 6.43 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Personal, Physical and Team Characteristics**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I think this call centre is a pleasant place to work in</b>											
147	16.9	317	36.5	224	25.8	113	13.0	61	7.0	2.56	1.129
<b>I like the people in this call/contact centre</b>											
294	33.9	363	41.8	178	20.5	11	1.3	15	1.7	1.94	0.868
<b>I look forward to coming to work</b>											
46	5.3	158	18.2	316	36.4	184	21.2	157	18.1	3.33	1.757
<b>I would not work anywhere else but in this call/contact centre</b>											
26	3.0	51	5.9	160	18.4	207	23.8	415	47.8	4.09	1.803
<b>I think call centre work is the only work for me</b>											
27	3.1	48	5.5	152	17.5	161	18.5	468	53.9	4.16	1.099
<b>I like the arrangement of desks in this call centre</b>											
93	10.7	167	19.2	311	35.8	179	20.6	106	12.2	3.04	1.155
<b>I think this call centre is better than other call centres I have worked in</b>											
98	11.3	137	15.8	435	50.1	92	10.6	80	9.2	2.90	1.053
<b>I think this call centre is worse than other call centres I have worked in</b>											
54	6.2	101	11.6	431	49.7	111	12.8	144	16.6	3.23	1.070
<b>I do not like the arrangement of desks in this call centre</b>											
88	10.1	184	21.2	252	29.0	183	21.1	147	16.9	3.14	1.230
<b>I do not like the equipment with which I work</b>											
60	6.9	181	20.9	312	35.9	162	18.7	141	16.2	3.17	1.146
<b>I get on well with members of my team</b>											
461	53.1	230	26.5	120	13.8	24	2.8	20	2.3	3.22	1.254
<b>I feel loyal to my team</b>											
292	33.6	267	30.8	209	24.1	65	7.5	22	2.5	2.13	1.051
<b>I do not think the team I work in is very helpful to its members</b>											
44	5.1	82	9.4	189	21.8	220	25.3	316	36.4	3.80	1.186
<b>I think the team makes the job bearable</b>											
268	30.9	278	32.0	224	25.8	37	4.3	43	5.0	2.19	1.084
<b>I think the team is more valuable for social rather than work activities</b>											
64	7.4	123	14.2	415	47.8	175	20.2	78	9.0	3.09	1.003
<b>I could get on with my work just as well if I were not a member of a team</b>											
111	12.8	213	24.5	251	28.9	179	20.6	100	11.5	2.93	1.202
<b>I think the team makes me work more efficiently and productively</b>											
147	16.9	239	27.5	340	39.2	89	10.3	38	4.4	2.57	1.033



**Table 6.43 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Personal, Physical and Team Characteristics**

There is a lot of disagreement about work amongst the team members											
39	4.5	71	8.2	262	30.2	218	25.1	264	30.4	3.70	1.127
In my experience teams do not perform very well											
26	3.0	67	7.7	224	25.8	231	26.6	306	35.3	3.85	1.089
I think the team is only as good as the leader											
112	12.9	180	20.7	257	29.6	135	15.6	167	19.2	3.08	1.295
I think the team makes my work less stressful and pressurised											
187	21.5	276	31.8	245	28.2	96	11.1	50	5.8	2.47	1.125
I get a lot of respect from my team members											
207	23.8	253	29.1	319	36.8	43	5.0	32	3.7	2.34	1.018

**6.3.17 Satisfaction: Team Manager and Customer Characteristics**

Table 6.44 describes items relating to team leadership and customers. Team leadership / is viewed in a positive light which indicate varying degrees of satisfaction, the one exception being that the team leader would not influence decisions to leave employment. Views of the customer relationship are also largely positive with the exception of views concerning abusive and difficult customers.

**Table 6.44 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Team Management and Customers**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
If it were not for my team manager I would have left this call centre by now											
49	5.6	115	13.2	221	25.5	158	18.2	310	35.7	3.66	1.252
My team manager motivates me to do my job											
93	10.7	293	33.8	219	25.2	146	16.8	102	11.8	2.85	1.187
I do not get much respect from my team manager											
72	8.3	95	10.9	213	24.5	188	21.7	285	32.8	3.61	1.280
My team manager is concerned about my training needs											
159	18.3	291	33.5	167	19.2	145	16.7	90	10.4	2.67	1.254
My team manager encourages me to develop my skills											
179	20.6	297	34.2	167	19.2	145	16.7	90	10.4	2.54	1.189
My team manager is concerned about my promotion prospects											
100	11.5	201	23.2	256	29.5	126	14.5	54	6.2	3.07	1.281
I am always kept up-to-date by my team manager about call centre matters											
203	23.4	254	29.3	177	20.4	110	12.7	107	12.3	2.61	1.316
My team manager is understanding about my having to meet my family responsibilities											
171	19.7	208	24.0	319	36.8	91	10.5	62	7.1	2.61	1.137
My team manager always gives me a chance to comment on any proposed changes affecting the call centre											
141	16.2	211	24.3	256	29.5	133	15.3	109	12.6	2.83	1.247
My team manager is always helpful in dealing with problems I or my team members may have											
273	31.5	257	29.6	200	23.0	41	4.7	81	9.3	2.30	1.232



**Table 6.44 Satisfaction: Attitudes towards Team Management and Customers**

<b>My team manager always responds to suggestions from employees</b>											
165	19.0	260	30.0	200	23.0	41	4.7	81	9.3	2.57	1.167
<b>I feel very loyal towards my customers</b>											
126	14.5	234	27.0	275	31.7	111	12.8	112	12.9	2.82	1.167
<b>I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work</b>											
271	31.2	261	30.1	211	24.3	73	8.4	43	5.0	2.25	1.136
<b>I do not think any differently towards my customers no matter how abusive or difficult they are</b>											
97	11.2	181	20.9	238	27.4	241	27.8	100	11.5	3.08	1.186
<b>I would treat customers better if I had more time</b>											
135	15.6	202	23.3	250	28.8	167	19.2	100	11.5	2.88	1.233
<b>I think dealing with customers is boring because you always have to say the same thing</b>											
103	11.9	164	18.9	253	29.1	206	23.7	130	15.0	3.11	1.229
<b>I always have to put on an act when speaking to customers</b>											
113	13.0	156	18.0	237	27.3	193	22.2	158	18.2	3.15	1.285
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more time</b>											
136	15.7	163	18.8	262	30.2	193	22.2	103	11.9	2.96	1.237
<b>Customers are sometimes so difficult, it makes my job unpleasant</b>											
193	22.2	282	32.5	252	29.0	76	8.8	55	6.3	2.44	1.122
<b>This sort of call centre gives customers a very good service</b>											
139	16.0	283	32.6	319	36.8	55	6.3	61	6.3	2.55	1.062
<b>I could give better service to customers if I had more regular training</b>											
87	10.0	253	29.1	325	37.4	120	13.8	72	8.3	2.81	1.069

Table 6.45 summarises all the items for the ‘satisfaction with work’ construct. The compound scores show that the vast majority of respondents fall within the neutral category, indicating neither high nor low levels of satisfaction.

**Table 6.45 Overall Satisfaction: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
0	0	66	7.6	793	91.4	3	0.3	0	0	2.93	.273

### 6.3.18 Intrinsic Factors

Table 6.46 is concerned with attitudes towards intrinsic aspects of work. Intrinsic factors are those aspects of respondents’ work which are integral to the job and include items concerning intrinsic aspects of satisfaction, the customer, products and services, the technology worked with, influence, variety and autonomy. The results indicate that respondents would like more job-related skills, more variety, a greater sense of achievement, more influence over the range of tasks, pace of work and work methods. On the other hand,



respondents are relatively satisfied with some aspects of their training, the customers, autonomy on the job, encouragement from team leader and esteem from fellow team workers.

**Table 6.46 Attitudes towards Intrinsic Work Factors**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am very satisfied with my job</b>											
77	8.9	210	24.2	257	29.6	178	20.5	144	16.6	3.12	1.207
<b>My job would benefit from being multi-skilled</b>											
189	21.8	231	26.6	251	28.9	119	13.7	77	8.9	2.61	1.218
<b>More knowledge of the type of customer I am dealing with is important for my job</b>											
302	34.8	265	30.5	225	25.9	44	5.1	30	3.5	2.12	1.054
<b>Knowledge of the product(s) and service(s) I am dealing with is important for my job</b>											
349	40.2	269	31.0	165	19.0	58	6.7	26	3.0	2.01	1.064
<b>More familiarity with the hardware and software that I am using is important for my job</b>											
326	37.6	281	32.4	187	21.5	43	5.0	29	3.3	2.04	1.045
<b>I get enough training to do my job well</b>											
135	15.6	293	33.8	238	27.4	140	16.1	60	6.9	2.65	1.131
<b>I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work</b>											
271	31.2	261	30.1	211	24.3	73	8.4	43	5.0	2.25	1.136
Very satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Satisfied with the amount of influence over my job</b>											
37	4.3	169	19.5	350	40.3	246	28.3	65	7.5	3.15	0.963
<b>Satisfied with the sense of achievement I get from my job</b>											
44	5.1	221	25.5	278	32.0	256	29.5	69	7.9	3.10	1.030
<b>Satisfied with how much variety I have in doing my job</b>											
44	5.1	128	14.7	227	26.2	287	33.1	182	21.0	3.50	1.127
<b>Satisfied with the extent to which I am left alone to get on with the job</b>											
161	18.5	278	32.0	210	24.2	139	16.0	76	8.8	2.64	1.206
<b>Satisfied with the encouragement I get from my supervisor/team leader</b>											
197	22.7	286	32.9	177	20.4	149	17.2	59	6.8	2.52	1.207
<b>Satisfied with the appreciation I get from my fellow teamworkers/colleagues</b>											
142	16.4	268	30.9	251	28.9	135	15.6	72	8.3	2.69	1.163
A lot		Some		A little		None		Don't know		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How much influence on the range of tasks I do in my job</b>											
72	8.3	187	21.5	198	22.8	392	45.2	19	2.2	3.11	1.037
<b>How much influence over the pace at which I work</b>											
123	14.2	231	26.6	158	18.2	332	38.2	23	2.6	3.11	1.037
<b>How much influence I have on how I do my work</b>											
132	15.2	238	27.4	247	28.5	226	26.0	25	2.9	2.74	1.092
Strongly dislike		Dislike		Neutral		Like		Like strongly		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I like my job</b>											
51	5.9	188	21.7	332	38.2	262	30.2	33	3.8	3.04	0.952



Table 6.47 summarises all the items for the 'intrinsic' construct. The summary data indicate that more could be done by local management to improve certain intrinsically focused job characteristics as referred to above. Overall, 53 per cent of respondents indicate low levels of satisfaction with intrinsic aspects of their work.

**Table 6.47 Attitudes towards Intrinsic Factors: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
0	0	2	0.2	366	42.2	460	53.0	40	4.6	2.62	.577

### 6.3.19 Team Relations

The 16 items comprising Table 6.48 describe the nature of team relations. Respondents indicated positive attitudes towards 13 items, which suggests that team relations are fairly good. This is confirmed by the overall compound scores in Table 6.48

**Table 6.48 Team Relations: Attitudes towards the Team**

Strongly dislike		Dislike		Neutral		Like		Like strongly		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I like my team members/fellow workers</b>											
4	0.5	18	2.1	102	11.8	415	47.8	329	37.9	4.21	0.761
Very satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Satisfied with the encouragement I get from my supervisor/team leader</b>											
197	22.7	286	32.9	177	20.4	149	17.2	59	6.8	2.52	1.207
<b>Satisfied with the appreciation I get from my fellow teamworkers/colleagues</b>											
142	16.4	268	30.9	251	28.9	135	15.6	72	8.3	2.69	1.163
A great deal		To some extent		Not much		Not at all		Does not apply		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I am pressured by my supervisor/team leader</b>											



**Table 6.48 Team Relations: Attitudes Towards the Team**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
124	14.3	180	20.7	341	39.3	195	22.5	24	2.8	2.79	1.037
<b>I get on well with members of my team</b>											
461	53.1	230	26.5	120	13.8	24	2.8	20	2.3	3.22	1.254
<b>I feel loyal to my team</b>											
292	33.6	267	30.8	209	24.1	65	7.5	22	2.5	2.13	1.051
<b>I do not think the team I work in is very helpful to its members</b>											
44	5.1	82	9.4	189	21.8	220	25.3	316	36.4	3.80	1.186
<b>I think the team makes the job bearable</b>											
268	30.9	278	32.0	224	25.8	37	4.3	43	5.0	2.19	1.084
<b>I think the team is more valuable for social rather than work activities</b>											
64	7.4	123	14.2	415	47.8	175	20.2	78	9.0	3.09	1.003
<b>I could get on with my work just as well if I were not a member of a team</b>											
111	12.8	213	24.5	251	28.9	179	20.6	100	11.5	2.93	1.202
<b>I think the team makes me work more efficiently and productively</b>											
147	16.9	239	27.5	340	39.2	89	10.3	38	4.4	2.57	1.033
<b>There is a lot of disagreement about work amongst the team members</b>											
39	4.5	71	8.2	262	30.2	218	25.1	264	30.4	3.70	1.127
<b>In my experience teams do not perform very well</b>											
26	3.0	67	7.7	224	25.8	231	26.6	306	35.3	3.85	1.089
<b>I think the team is only as good as the leader</b>											
112	12.9	180	20.7	257	29.6	135	15.6	167	19.2	3.08	1.295
<b>I think the team makes my work less stressful and pressurised</b>											
187	21.5	276	31.8	245	28.2	96	11.1	50	5.8	2.47	1.125
<b>I get a lot of respect from my team members</b>											
207	23.8	253	29.1	319	36.8	43	5.0	32	3.7	2.34	1.018

Table 6.49 summarises all the items for the ‘team relations’ construct. The compound scores indicate that, overall, respondents’ attitudes towards their team are largely positive with 47.6 per cent indicating high levels of satisfaction with co-workers.

**Table 6.49 Attitudes towards Team Relations: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
19	2.2	413	47.6	426	49.1	10	1.2	0	0	2.49	.563



### 6.3.20 Involvement and Consultation

Table 6.50 provides frequency data for consultation with team manager, communications, involvement and training. With regard to consultation, 38.9 and 56.5 per cent of respondents were never consulted with regard to promotion and pay respectively, but nevertheless the data indicates varying levels of consultation on three issues apart from pay. The methods of communication that were most frequently helpful were email, meetings with team leaders and team briefings, with notice boards and magazines / journals being the least helpful. The results concerning involvement indicate low frequencies for eliciting views on planning, redundancy, work practices, pay and health and safety. The outcomes for the following five items - work problems, fair treatment, proposed changes and responding to employee suggestions - were more evenly distributed

**Table 6.50 Attitudes towards Involvement and Consultation**

Annually		Every 6 months		Every 3 months		Every month		Every 2 weeks		Never		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How often do you discuss with your team manager how you are getting on with your job?</b>													
59	6.8	84	9.7	157	18.1	301	34.7	210	24.2	54	6.2	3.79	1.278
<b>How often do you discuss with your team manager your chances of promotion</b>													
94	10.8	78	9	99	11.4	177	20.4	80	9.2	338	38.9	4.25	1.745
<b>How often do you discuss with your team manager your training needs?</b>													
130	15.0	95	10.9	108	12.4	287	33.1	136	15.7	108	12.4	3.61	1.558
<b>How often do you discuss with your team manager your pay?</b>													
143	16.5	43	5.0	74	8.5	73	8.4	40	4.6	490	56.5	4.50	1.962
Very helpful		Helpful		Not very helpful		Not at all helpful		Not used here		Mean	SD		
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%				
<b>How helpful are notice boards in keeping you up to date?</b>													
91	10.5	216	24.9	255	29.4	198	22.8	106	12.2	3.01	1.179		
<b>How helpful is email in keeping you up to date?</b>													
276	31.8	209	24.1	116	13.4	111	12.8	152	17.5	2.60	1.481		
<b>How helpful are workplace newsletters or magazines in keeping you up to date?</b>													
80	9.2	205	23.6	299	34.4	142	16.4	140	16.1	3.07	1.189		
<b>How helpful are meetings of team leaders and employees in keeping you up to date?</b>													
93	10.7	331	38.1	208	24.0	153	17.6	81	9.3	2.77	1.144		
<b>How helpful are team briefings in keeping you up to date?</b>													
135	15.6	376	43.3	143	16.5	102	11.8	111	12.8	2.63	1.245		



**Table 6.50 Attitudes towards Involvement and Consultation**

Frequently		Sometimes		Hardly ever		Never		Don't know		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on future plans for the workplace?</b>											
74	8.5	225	25.9	202	23.3	332	38.2	31	3.6	2.75	1.021
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on staffing issues including redundancy?</b>											
32	3.7	149	17.2	239	27.5	408	47.0	37	4.3	2.82	1.017
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on changes to work practices?</b>											
88	10.1	225	25.9	209	24.1	334	38.5	9	1.0	2.67	0.985
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on pay issues?</b>											
43	5.0	150	17.3	250	28.8	403	46.4	17	2.0	2.76	0.990
<b>How often are you and others asked for your views on health and safety at work?</b>											
56	6.5	181	20.9	259	29.8	352	40.6	15	1.7	2.80	0.999
Very good		Good		Neutral		Poor		Very poor		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>How good are managers and leaders at dealing with work problems you or others may have?</b>											
84	9.7	280	32.3	232	26.7	167	19.2	103	11.9	2.91	1.172
<b>How good are managers at treating employees fairly?</b>											
105	12.1	318	36.6	206	23.7	167	19.2	103	11.9	2.79	1.204
<b>How good are managers and leaders at providing everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes?</b>											
67	7.7	234	27.0	228	26.3	193	22.2	144	16.6	3.13	1.205
<b>How good are managers and leaders at keeping everyone up-to-date about proposed changes?</b>											
134	15.4	243	28.0	205	23.6	203	23.4	81	9.3	2.83	1.217
<b>How good are managers and leaders at responding to suggestions from employees?</b>											
80	9.2	176	20.3	272	31.3	180	18.3	159	18.3	3.19	1.217
Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I think managers respond to suggestions from employees</b>											
54	6.2	174	20.0	291	33.5	194	22.4	144	16.6	3.23	1.140
<b>I think managers here provide everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes</b>											
40	4.6	179	20.6	252	29.0	225	25.9	158	18.2	3.33	1.137
<b>I think managers keep everyone up-to-date about proposed changes</b>											
71	8.7	196	22.6	240	27.6	188	21.7	159	18.3	3.20	1.221
<b>I am always kept up-to-date by my team manager about call centre matters</b>											
203	23.4	254	29.3	177	20.4	110	12.7	107	12.3	2.61	1.316
<b>My team manager always gives me a chance to comment on any proposed changes affecting the call centre</b>											
141	16.2	211	24.3	256	29.5	133	15.3	109	12.6	2.83	1.247
<b>My team manager always responds to suggestions from employees</b>											
165	19.0	260	30.0	200	23.0	41	4.7	81	9.3	2.57	1.167

Table 6.51 summarises all the items for the 'Involvement and Consultation' construct. The summary data indicates that the frequency of consultation is variable with 57.1 per cent of respondents in the 'neutral' category.



**Table 6.51 Attitudes towards Involvement and Consultation: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
4	0.5	238	27.4	496	57.1	121	13.9	9	1.0	2.88	.677

**6.3.30 Extrinsic Factors**

Table 6.52 describes responses to extrinsic factors and include those items which influence work operations but which are not part of the tasks which comprise respondents' jobs. Of the 26 items describing extrinsics, eleven items are positively regarded by respondents. These include relationships with local and team management, the workplace itself, and physical work conditions. Negatively viewed items include call monitoring, control over work, job security, promotion and pay and pay-related factors.

**Table 6.52 Attitudes towards Extrinsic Factors**

Strongly agree		Slightly agree		Neutral		Slightly disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>I do not like my calls being monitored</b>											
174	20.0	211	24.3	289	33.3	103	11.9	89	10.3	2.68	1.215
<b>I feel my job is secure in this call/contact centre</b>											
111	12.8	225	25.9	246	28.3	140	16.1	142	16.4	2.97	1.263
<b>I think there is too much control over the way I work</b>											
181	20.9	217	25.0	260	30.0	157	18.1	49	5.6	2.63	1.166
<b>I think there is a lot of scope for promotion</b>											
76	8.8	187	21.5	233	26.8	186	21.4	184	21.2	3.25	1.254
<b>I think relations between workers and managers at my workplace are very good</b>											
178	20.5	241	27.8	181	20.9	135	15.6	125	14.4	2.75	1.337
<b>I think relations between managers and workers at my workplace are good</b>											
147	16.9	261	30.1	199	22.9	128	14.7	112	12.9	2.76	1.275
<b>I think relations between managers and workers at my workplace are neither good nor poor</b>											
75	8.6	111	12.8	453	52.2	117	13.5	87	10.0	3.04	1.019
<b>I think relations between managers and workers at my workplace are poor</b>											
113	13.0	151	17.4	215	24.8	178	20.5	188	21.7	3.21	1.331
<b>I think relations between managers and workers at my workplace are very poor</b>											
117	13.5	148	17.1	208	24.0	78	9.0	290	33.4	3.33	1.449
<b>I think this call centre is a pleasant place to work in</b>											
147	16.9	317	36.5	224	25.8	113	13.0	61	7.0	2.56	1.129
<b>I like the people in this call/contact centre</b>											



**Table 6.52 Attitudes towards Extrinsic Factors**

294	33.9	363	41.8	178	20.5	11	1.3	15	1.7	1.94	0.868
<b>I like the arrangement of desks in this call centre</b>											
93	10.7	167	19.2	311	35.8	179	20.6	106	12.2	3.04	1.155
<b>I do not like the arrangement of desks in this call centre</b>											
88	10.1	184	21.2	252	29.0	183	21.1	147	16.9	3.14	1.230
<b>I do not like the equipment with which I work</b>											
60	6.9	181	20.9	312	35.9	162	18.7	141	16.2	3.17	1.146
<b>I think the team is more valuable for social rather than work activities</b>											
64	7.4	123	14.2	415	47.8	175	20.2	78	9.0	3.09	1.003
<b>If it were not for my team manager I would have left this call centre by now</b>											
49	5.6	115	13.2	221	25.5	158	18.2	310	35.7	3.66	1.252
<b>My team manager is concerned about my promotion prospects</b>											
100	11.5	201	23.2	256	29.5	126	14.5	54	6.2	3.07	1.281
<b>My team manager is understanding about my having to meet my family responsibilities</b>											
171	19.7	208	24.0	319	36.8	91	10.5	62	7.1	2.61	1.137
<b>Very satisfied</b>		<b>Satisfied</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Dissatisfied</b>		<b>Very dissatisfied</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>Satisfied with the amount of pay I receive</b>											
34	3.9	193	22.2	203	23.4	282	32.5	155	17.9	3.38	1.129
<b>Strongly dislike</b>		<b>Dislike</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Like</b>		<b>Like strongly</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>I like the hours</b>											
107	12.3	231	26.6	231	26.6	252	29.0	47	5.4	2.89	1.120
<b>I like my pay</b>											
180	20.7	244	28.1	264	30.4	159	18.3	19	2.2	2.53	1.079
<b>I like my bonuses</b>											
245	28.2	152	17.5	230	26.5	187	21.5	48	5.5	2.58	1.257
<b>I like my fringe benefits</b>											
198	22.8	121	13.9	360	41.5	131	15.1	51	5.9	2.67	1.159
<b>I like the management here</b>											
62	7.1	101	11.6	426	49.1	242	27.9	34	3.9	3.10	0.912
<b>I like the physical conditions (layout of desks etc)</b>											
82	9.4	172	19.8	317	36.5	231	26.6	65	7.5	3.03	1.069
<b>A great deal</b>		<b>To some extent</b>		<b>Not much</b>		<b>Not at all</b>		<b>Does not apply</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>I am pressured by my supervisor/team leader</b>											
124	14.3	180	20.7	341	39.3	195	22.5	24	2.8	2.79	1.037

Table 6.53 summarises all the items for the ‘extrinsics’ construct. The compound scores indicate that overall the effect of extrinsic factors is overwhelmingly neutral.

**Table 6.51 Attitudes towards Extrinsic Factors: Compound Scores**

Very high		High		Neutral		Low		Very low		Mean	SD
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
0	0	54	6.2	776	89.4	38	4.4	0	0	2.98	.325



## **6.4 The Hypotheses**

Section 6.4 describes the results of the analyses concerning each of the ten hypotheses. Each construct (also described as ‘variables’) was subjected to standard multiple regression tests in order to determine the extent to which the given independent variable(s) are predictive of the given dependent variable and how much unique variance each of the independent variable(s) explain the dependent variable over and above the other independent variables included in the set. Chi-square measures were calculated in order to determine the direction of the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Section 6.3.1 provides an overall explanation of the statistical analysis. The sections which follow provide a summary of the results omitting the explanation.

### **6.4.1 Hypothesis 1: That Customer Interaction, Loyalty to Employer, Satisfaction With Leader and HR Practices are Positively Associated with Commitment.**

The regression analysis concerning the impact of the independent variables of human resource practices, customer interaction, satisfaction with team leader and loyalty to employer on the dependent variable commitment is presented in Table 6.18. The model summary within Table 6.52 provides an adjusted  $R^2$  value of .970 which, expressed as a percentage means that the four independent variables explain 97.0 per cent of the variance in commitment. However, this does not explain the extent to which the independent variables (predictors) contribute to the prediction of commitment. The Beta measures for standardised co-efficients enable comparison of the contribution of each independent variable. The largest Beta co-efficient in Table 6.18 is .581 for the loyalty construct which indicates that loyalty makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining commitment, while human resource practices is the weakest at explaining commitment. However, the significance values of .000



for the four independent variables subjected to ANOVA indicate that all four variables make a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of commitment. The chi-square analysis describes the strength of the direction of relationships for each of the dependent variables with the dependent variable.

In summary, the model which includes the four independent variables of human resource practices, customer interaction, satisfaction with team leader and loyalty to employer explains 97.0 per cent of the variance in commitment. Of the four independent variables, loyalty makes the largest unique contribution. The results support hypothesis 1, but with qualifications which are discussed in Chapter 7.

**Table 6.52 Regression Analysis: Impact of Human Resource Practices, Customer/CSR Interaction, Loyalty, Satisfaction with Team Leader on Commitment**

Factor	Beta	T	Significance		
Human Resource Practices	.097	6.558	.000		
Customer interaction	.157	21.777	.000		
Loyalty	.581	54.411	.000		
Satisfaction with Leader	.273	18.862	.000		
<b>Model Summary</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Std error of estimate</b>	
	.985	.970	.970	.09664	
<b>Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)</b>					
	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Regression	262.884	4	65.711	7036.023	.000
Residual	8.060	863	.009		
Total	270.904	867			
<b>Direction of Relationships</b>					
<b>Nature of relationship</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>Direction</b>			
Customer interaction with commitment	Yes	Moderate customer interaction: Moderate to low commitment			
Loyalty to employer with commitment	Yes	Low loyalty: Moderate to low commitment			
Satisfaction with leader with commitment	Yes	Moderate satisfaction: Moderate to low commitment			
HR practices with commitment	Yes	Moderate to low HRP: Moderate to low commitment			



### 6. 4.2 Hypothesis 2: That Satisfaction is Positively Associated with Commitment.

Table 6. 53 explores the relationship and association between the independent variable work satisfaction with the dependent variable commitment. The table demonstrates that satisfaction explains 72.0 per cent of the variance in commitment with a significance value of .000. The chi-square analysis describes the strength of the direction of relationships. The results support hypothesis 2.

**Table 6. 53 Regression Analysis: Impact of Work Satisfaction on Commitment**

Factor		Beta	T	Significance	
Work satisfaction		.848	47.177	.000	
Model Summary	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std error of estimate	
	.848	.720	.720	.29601	
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	195.021	1	195.021	2225.658	.000
Residual	75.882	886	.088		
Total	270.904	867			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship	Chi-square	Direction			
Satisfaction with commitment	Yes	Moderate satisfaction; Moderate to low commitment			

### 6. 4.3 Hypothesis 3: That Intention to Quit is Negatively Associated with Commitment.

Table 6. 54 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable ‘intention to quit’ on ‘commitment’, the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that ‘intention to quit’ explains 54.5 per cent of the variance in commitment with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a moderate association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square analysis is confirmed, thereby supporting hypothesis 3.



**Table 6.54 Regression Analysis: Impact of Intention to Quit on Commitment**

Factor	Beta	T	Significance		
Intention to quit	.739	32.173	.000		
<b>Model Summary</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>		
	.739	.545	.545		
			<b>Std error of estimate</b>		
			.37744		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	147.188	1	147.188	1033.168	.000
Residual	122.160	861	.142		
Total	269.848	862			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship	Chi-square	Direction			
Intention to quit with commitment	Yes	High intention to quit: Moderate to low commitment			

**6. 4.4 Hypothesis 4a: That Alienation and Work Satisfaction are Negatively Associated with Each Other**

Table 6. 55 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable satisfaction on alienation, the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that satisfaction explains 65.7 per cent of the variance in alienation with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a strong association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square analysis is confirmed, thus supporting hypothesis 4a.

**Table 6.55 Regression Analysis: Relationship between Alienation and Satisfaction**

Factor	Beta	T	Significance		
Satisfaction	.811	40.742	.000		
<b>Model Summary</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>		
	.811	.657	.657		
			<b>Std error of estimate</b>		
			.25658		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	109.276	1	109.276	1659.120	.000
Residual	57.010	866	.066		
Total	166.286	867			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship	Chi-square	Direction			
Alienation with satisfaction	Yes	Moderate to high alienation: Moderate satisfaction			



**6.4.5: Hypothesis 4b: That Work Satisfaction and Alienation are Negatively Associated With Each Other**

Table 6. 56 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable alienation on satisfaction, the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that alienation explains 65.7 per cent of the variance in satisfaction with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a strong association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square analysis is confirmed, thus supporting hypothesis 4a.

**Table 6.56 Regression Analysis: Relationship between Satisfaction and Alienation**

Factor		Beta	T	Significance	
Alienation		.811	40.742	.000	
Model Summary		R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std error of estimate
		.811	.657	.657	.17868
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	52.966	1	52.966	1659.120	.000
Residual	27.658	866	.032		
Total	80.644	867			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship		Chi-square	Direction		
Satisfaction with alienation		Yes	Moderate satisfaction: Moderate to high alienation		

**6.4.6: Hypothesis 5: That Management and Technological Control is Positively Associated with Alienation**

Table 6.57 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable management and technological control on alienation, the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that management and technological control explains 60.7 per cent of the



variance in alienation with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a strong association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square analysis is confirmed, thus supporting hypothesis 5.

**Table 6.57 Regression Analysis: Impact of Management and Technological Control on Alienation**

Factor		Beta	T	Significance	
Management and technological control		.780	36.640	.000	
Model Summary		R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std error of estimate
		.780	.608	.607	.27440
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	101.081	1	101.081	1342.465	.000
Residual	65.205	866	.075		
Total	166.286	867			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship		Chi-square	Direction		
Control with alienation		Yes	Moderate to high control: Moderate or neutral alienation		

#### 6.4.7: Hypothesis 6: That Loyalty to Organisation is Negatively Associated with Alienation

Table 6.58 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable loyalty to organisation on alienation, the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that loyalty to organisation explains 71.5 per cent of the variance in alienation with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a strong association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square analysis is confirmed, thus supporting hypothesis 6.

**Table 6.58 Regression Analysis: Impact of Loyalty to Organisation on Alienation**

Factor		Beta	T	Significance	
Loyalty to organisation		.846	46.640	.000	
Model Summary		R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std error of estimate
		.846	.715	.715	.23383
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	118.936	1	118.936	2175.273	.000
Residual	47.350	866	.075		
Total	166.286	867			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship		Chi-square	Direction		
Loyalty with alienation		Yes	Low loyalty: Moderate alienation		



**6.4.8: Hypothesis 7: That Management and Technological Control is Negatively Associated with Work Satisfaction**

Table 6.59 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable management and technological control on satisfaction, the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that management and technological control explains 46.4 per cent of the variance in satisfaction with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a moderate association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square analysis is confirmed, thus supporting hypothesis 7.

**Table 6.59 Regression Analysis: Impact of Management and Technological Control on Satisfaction**

Factor		Beta	T	Significance	
Management and technological control		.682	27.406	.000	
Model Summary		R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std error of estimate
		.682	.464	.464	.22332
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	37.456	1	37.456	751.074	.000
Residual	43.188	866	.050		
Total	80.644	867			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship		Chi-square	Direction		
Control with satisfaction		Yes	High control: Moderate satisfaction		

**6.4.9: Hypothesis 8: That leader satisfaction, team relations, intrinsics, extrinsics, involvement, customer interaction and employee control over work are positively associated with work satisfaction**

The regression analysis concerning the impact of the independent variables of leader satisfaction, team relations, intrinsics, extrinsics, involvement, customer interaction and employee control over work on the dependent variable work satisfaction is presented in Table 6.60. The model summary within Table 6.60 provides an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of .901 which, expressed as a percentage means that the four independent variables explain 90.1 per cent of the variance



in commitment. However, this does not explain the extent to which the independent variables (predictors) contribute to the prediction of work satisfaction. The Beta measures for standardised co-efficients enable comparison of the contribution of each independent variable. The largest Beta co-efficient in Table 6.26 is .329 for the involvement construct which indicates that involvement makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining satisfaction, while employee control over work operations is the weakest at explaining satisfaction. However, the significance values of .000 for the seven independent variables subjected to ANOVA indicate that all seven variables make a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of satisfaction. The chi-square analysis describes the strength of the direction of relationships for each of the dependent variables with the dependent variable. In summary, the model which includes the seven independent variables of leader satisfaction, team relations, intrinsics, extrinsics, involvement, customer interaction and employee control over work explains 90.1 per cent of the variance in satisfaction. Of the seven independent variables, involvement makes the largest unique contribution. The results confirm hypothesis 8, but with qualifications which are discussed in Chapter 7.

**Table 6.60 Regression Analysis: Impact of Leader Satisfaction, Team Relations, Intrinsics, Extrinsics, Involvement, Customer Interaction and Employee Control over Work on Satisfaction**

Factor	Beta	T	Significance		
Satisfaction with leader	.230	10.351	.000		
Team relations	.298	24.367	.000		
Extrinsics	.216	14.610	.000		
Intrinsics	.121	10.388	.000		
Involvement	.329	15.991	.000		
Customer interaction	.273	23.658	.000		
Employee control over work	.078	5.854	.000		
<b>Model Summary</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Std error of estimate</b>	
	.950	.902	.901	.09597	
<b>Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)</b>					
	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Regression	72.723	7	10.389	1127.903	.000
Residual	7.921	860	.009		
Total	80.644	867			
<b>Direction of Relationships</b>					



Nature of relationship	Chi-square	Direction
Satisfaction with leader with satisfaction	Yes	Leader satisfaction moderate: Satisfaction moderate
Team relations with satisfaction	Yes	Team relations high: Satisfaction moderate
Extrinsics with satisfaction	Yes	Extrinsics moderate: Satisfaction moderate
Intrinsics with satisfaction	Yes	Intrinsics moderate to low: Satisfaction moderate
Involvement with satisfaction	Yes	Involvement moderate: Satisfaction moderate
Customer interaction with satisfaction	Yes	Customer interaction moderate: Satisfaction moderate
Employee control with satisfaction	Yes	Employee control low to moderate: Satisfaction moderate

#### 6.4.10: Hypothesis 9: That Alienation is Negatively Associated with Commitment

Table 6.61 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable alienation on commitment, the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that alienation explains 73.8 per cent per cent of the variance in commitment with a significance value of .000, hence indicating a moderate association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square analysis is confirmed, thereby supporting hypothesis 9.

**Table 6.61 Regression Analysis: Impact of Alienation on Commitment**

Factor	Beta	T	Significance
Alienation	.859	49.389	.000
<b>Model Summary</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>
	.859	.738	.738
			<b>Std error of estimate</b>
			.28629
<b>Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)</b>			
	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>
Regression	199.926	1	199.296
Residual	70.978	866	.082
Total	270.904	867	
<b>Direction of Relationships</b>			
<b>Nature of relationship</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>Direction</b>	
Alienation with commitment	Yes	Moderate to high alienation: Moderate to low commitment	



### 6.4.11 Hypothesis 10: That Human Resource Practices is Positively Associated with Commitment

Table 6.62 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable human resource practices, on commitment the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that human resource practices explains 78.1 per cent per cent of the variance in commitment with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a moderate association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square suggests that the relationship is neutral and that the hypothesis is partially supported.

**Table 6.62 Regression Analysis: Impact of Human Resource Practices on Commitment**

Factor		Beta	T	Significance	
Human resource practices		.884	55.669	.000	
Model Summary		R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std error of estimate
		.884	.782	.781	.26139
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	211.736	1	211.736	3099.035	.000
Residual	59.168	866	.068		
Total	270.904	867			
Direction of Relationships					
Nature of relationship		Chi-square	Direction		
Human resource practices with commitment		Yes	Moderate human resource practices: Moderate to low commitment		

### 6.5 Summary

The results presented in this chapter reveal a general profile of customer service and sales representatives (CSRs). The data elicited from the questionnaire responses concerning the multiple constructs of respondents are summarised. A summary of the hypothesis outcomes is also provided.



### **6.5.1 Respondent Profile: Age, Gender and Length of Service**

With regard to age, most respondents are relatively young with 73 per cent of respondents falling within the 18-27 year age bands. The majority of respondents (56 per cent) are female and 51 per cent have less than one year of service and 86 per cent of respondents have less than two years service. The data concerning age, gender and length of service broadly corresponds to the national (UK) profile (IDS, 2008).

### **6.5.2 Respondent Profile: Contracts, Absence, Turnover and Staff Association/Union Membership**

The majority of respondents (66 per cent) are employed on a full-time basis. The remainder are either part-time or agency workers. Levels of absenteeism and labour turnover are high, the data revealing a 24 per cent annual rate of churn which reflects the national profile.

Membership of trade unions and staff associations is extremely low (6 per cent and 19 per cent respectively).

## **6.6 Summary of Responses to the Multiple Constructs**

The overall responses concerning each construct are summarised in Table 6.63. The multiple constructs are: Human Resource Management Practices (83 items); Intention to Quit (8 items); Alienation (48 items); Commitment (61 items); Satisfaction (108 items); Loyalty (37 items); Quality of Customer Interaction (10 items); Satisfaction with Leader (25 items); Employee Control over Work Operations (10 items); Management / Technological Control (16 items); Intrinsic (17 items); Team Relations (15 items); Involvement / Consultation (25 items); Extrinsic (26 items).



**Table 6.63 Aggregate Responses to Multiple Constructs**

Construct	Response
Human resource management practices	Mainly neutral. Only 6% have a negative view of human resource management practices
Intention to quit	46% of respondents are likely or highly likely to quit
Alienation	Mainly neutral (72%). 23% report low levels of alienation. Only 5% report high levels of alienation
Commitment	Mainly neutral. 18.5% report low levels of commitment. Generally low concerning the organisation and senior management.
Satisfaction	Predominantly neutral (91%)
Loyalty	28% report low loyalty levels. 61% are neutral
Quality of customer interaction	Mainly neutral (69%)
Satisfaction with team leader and local management	31% report high levels of satisfaction. 50.5% neutral
Employee control over work operations	25% report low levels of control. 23% report high levels of control
Management and technological control over work operations	38% report high levels of management control
Intrinsics	42% report low levels
Team relations	50% report good team relations
Involvement and consultation	Frequency of consultation is variable. 27% report high levels at workplace.
Extrinsics	89% are neutral

## 6.7 Results of the Hypotheses

The results of the hypotheses are summarised in Table 6.64.

**Table 6.64 Results of the Hypotheses**

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis	Result
1	Customer interaction, loyalty to employer, satisfaction with leader and HR practices are positively associated with commitment.	Results support hypothesis
2	Satisfaction is positively associated with commitment	Results support hypothesis
3	Intention to quit is negatively associated with commitment	Results support hypothesis
4a	Alienation and work satisfaction are negatively associated with each other	Results support hypothesis
4b	Work satisfaction and alienation are negatively associated with each other	Results support hypothesis
5	Management and technological control is positively associated with alienation	Results support hypothesis
6	Loyalty to organisation is negatively associated with alienation	Results support hypothesis
7	Management and technological control is negatively associated with work satisfaction	Results support hypothesis
8	Leader satisfaction, team relations, intrinsic, extrinsics, involvement, customer interaction and employee control over work are positively associated with work satisfaction	Results support hypothesis
9	Alienation is negatively associated with commitment	Results support hypothesis
10	That human resource practices is positively associated with commitment	Results partially support hypothesis



The results presented in this chapter are discussed with reference to both the main constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction and to the research hypotheses, in Chapter 7.



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the outcomes of the research in respect of both the two research question considered in Chapters 1 and 2 and the research hypotheses which were addressed in Chapter 3. The research questions are:

1. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?
2. What is the nature of the association between the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?

The results of the research in relation to descriptive data and the research hypotheses were presented in Chapter 6. While much of the relevant research literature was reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, and given the lengthy timescale of the fieldwork, a selection of more recent literature germane to the research focus of the thesis is provided in this chapter. In this chapter, the research results are evaluated in the light of extant literature. The first research question identifies the four main concepts relevant to this thesis and these are considered individually in relation to the results. A brief discussion of the specific hypotheses which stem from the second research question is then presented. The extent to which the research



makes a contribution to knowledge is also considered in this chapter. This is followed by a brief consideration of the contribution the research makes to the call centre literature and an indication of the extent to which the investigation may lead to further research in this area.

## **7.2 Control: Context and Discussion**

In Chapter 2, a critique was provided of labour process theory in relation to control structures and processes within organisations. It was argued that Braverman's (1974) seminal contribution to labour process theory overestimated the extent to which Taylorist management practices and strategies were dominant (Thompson and McHugh, 2002). The emergence and proliferation of the call centre workplace has, to some extent, re-focused the debate concerning control, emphasising intra-organisational foci of control rather than extra-organisational and societal control mechanisms.

### **7.2.1 Overview**

Within the call centre milieu, technological surveillance, mainly in the form of automated call distribution (ACD), plays a crucial part in shaping the actions and behaviour of customer service/sales representatives (CSRs) in relation to both output-oriented performance and the interaction between CSR and customer. In addition, remote monitoring of a proportion of calls is routinely used as a control device in order to facilitate and elicit appropriate behaviour and to reward and discipline CSRs. In commenting upon the actual and potential extent of technological control in call centres, Taylor and Bain (2007) argue that:

*ACD and computer technologies (in call centres) create the potential for speeding up call flow, intensifying control etc. And these were the very outcomes sought in practice by many employers as they pursued cost reduction, profit maximisation and mass customer service in competitive markets. (p. 354).*



One of the more credible models of call centres which explains control differentials was devised by Frenkel *et al* (1999) whose research into front-line workers was based upon a threefold classification of workflows two of which are pertinent to this discussion. These are firstly what Frenkel *et al.* call ‘mass customised’ or ‘service’ workflows and secondly ‘sales’ workflows. Service workflows are characterised by simple, mainly non-customised products and high volume customer interaction together with high levels of dependence upon IT systems, supervisor and customer dependence. The work is routine, involving response to queries and making basic transactions. Sales workflows are typified by a slightly more complex and customised product than is usual with service workflows –the selling of financial products being characteristic examples – and the work is less routine but still highly customer dependent.

Standardised service and sales workflows within call centres are typical phenomena which characterise the ‘mass production call centre’ (Batt and Moynihan, 2002). In the UK, the majority of call centres are of the mass production type (Taylor and Bain, 2007; Callaghan and Thompson, 2001), manifesting the exigencies for high levels of management and technological control and prioritised call throughput. The model presented in Figure 2.1 (Chapter 2) and reproduced below as Figure 7.1, encapsulates the type and nature of control imperatives and outcomes relevant to service and sales workflows within the mass production call centre and utilises the contributions of Frenkel *et al.* (1999), p. 137; Sewell, 1998, pp. 416, 418; Child, (1984), p. 159. In this section of the chapter, reference is made to the ‘vertical’ (top downwards) aspects of control only and incorporates the *info-normative* and *output-procedural* control typologies. As explained in Chapter 2, the *info-normative* type is characteristic of service workflows and in which IT-generated information forms the basis for control. The normative element is provided by facilitative supervision on the part of team leaders. *Output-procedural* control is typical of sales workflows, where ‘output measurement



based on customer decisions (to apply and qualify for loans) is complemented mainly by enforcement of company procedures' (Frenkel *et al.*, 1999, p. 81). The combination of both output-procedural and info-normative controls is also applicable to those CSRs who adopt both sales and service functions as part of their job role.

### **7.3 Control: Discussion of Results**

Two categories are considered here. The first is management and technological control which includes all the vertical control characteristics identified in Figure 7.1. These comprise the nature and direction of work tasks, evaluation of performance, the impact of sanctions and rewards and the extent to which the disciplinary role of surveillance is used (the latter two characteristics are discussed elsewhere in this chapter) . The types of control exercised are, by reference to the second column in Figure 7.1, both technological and managerial and are concerned with perceived and actual pressure upon CSRs' jobs and tasks as a result of the imposition of these control systems as depicted in Figure 7.1. The second category concerns the extent to which CSRs believe they can exert control over their work operations. The results concerning attitudes towards management and technological control are described and summarised in Chapter 6, Tables 6.34 and 6.36 and indicate that 37.8 per cent of CSRs perceive that they are working within a high control environment while 59 per cent have neutral feelings about control in general. The results, therefore, suggest that CSRs neither work within an all-encompassing, panoptic sweatshop environment nor conform to the image of 'the technologically incarcerated, regimented front-line employee' (Frenkel *et al.*: p. 91) Indeed, much research has discredited the 'vulgar' sweatshop view of call centres which is now regarded by many researchers as rather outdated (Brook, 2007; Taylor and Bain, 2007; Callaghan and Thompson, 2001; Bain and Taylor, 2000; Belt *et al.*, 2002; Hutchinson *et al.* 2000; Taylor and Bain, 1999; Frenkel *et al.* 1999).



Figure 7.1: A Call Centre Control Typology (reproduced from Chapter 2)

Vertical (top downwards): Info-normative and output-procedural

<i>Control Characteristics</i>	<i>Type of control</i>
<i>Nature of work task analysis</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Individual, tending to team. Managers establish initial team norms on the basis of average human and productive capacities; must ensure minimum level of conformance with respect to attaining these managerially defined norms.	In most instances. Often but not always centralised, involving direct supervision based on technical expertise with reward and punishment reinforcing conformity to personal authority.
<i>Direction of work tasks</i>	<i>Bureaucratic/Managerial</i>
Mainly standardised and formalised. The times needed to perform standardised and formalised work tasks are aggregated and expressed in both team and individual forms. To some limited and variable extent, individuals may experiment to establish their own ways of working within their team.	In the majority of instances and involves breaking down of tasks into easily definable elements; formally specified methods, procedures and rules applied to the conduct of tasks; reward and punishment systems to reinforce conformity to procedures and rules.
<i>Evaluation of work done</i>	<i>Technological</i>
Rational and individual. Evaluation of performance undertaken on an individual and rational basis through work monitoring embedded in the technological infrastructure and architecture of the call centre. Performance information widely publicised within and between teams often via public display.	Whereby the use of technology is designed to limit variation in the conduct of tasks, with respect to pace, sequence and physical methods such as telephonic skills. Widespread use of monitoring equipment facilitates control from afar.
<i>Mode of sanction and reward</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Superior to subordinate. The output of work monitoring identifies both 'good' and 'poor' performers. Managers can then act accordingly to sanction them or undertake remedial interventions such as re-training and dismissal.	Via performance and appraisal interviews and assessments on a regular basis involving line manager but not normally the team leader.
<i>Form of surveillance and its disciplinary role</i>	<i>Technological and Bureaucratic/Managerial</i>
Panoptic (obedience). Surveillance incorporated into the technology of production; provides a high degree of transparency; instils a high degree of self-discipline in relation to the achievement of minimum targets. Customer / CSR (service and sales) output surveillance.	Controls to enforce discipline and standardised performance output. Emotional labour used as a control mechanism also incorporated into training activities used to develop social skills.
<b>Horizontal / lateral relations within teams: socio-normative</b>	
<i>Nature of work task analysis</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Team – individual. Team should go beyond minimum expectations and optimise its performance around the best performer.	In that the team leader, who 'motivates' the team as a whole and encourages better team performance by understanding reasons why better performers outperform their peers.
<i>Direction of work tasks</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Within the team, details of individual performance that exceeds the minimum levels are identified and rationalised so that they become the new norm for the whole team.	As this requires the consensus of the team whereby the team normalises its performance around better workers. Desirable but unrealistic.
<i>Mode of sanction and reward</i>	<i>Personal</i>
The team develops formal and informal means of sanctioning and rewarding its members' behaviour.	In practice can only be limited to 'prizes' awards and bonuses which supplement basic pay.
<i>Form of surveillance and its disciplinary role</i>	<i>Personal</i>
Team members conduct intense surveillance of each other's activities; instils a high degree of self-discipline making team members strive to improve their own performance at norms set near the level of the most able; other forms of peer group pressure brought to bear on those seen to be letting the team down.	Unrealistic within a call centre context where peer surveillance would require a major re-structuring of work activities and a major culture change.

Adapted from Frenkel et al (1999), p. 137; Sewell, 1998, pp.416, 418; Child, (1984), p. 1



However this does not mean that the dominant experience is not of routinised, repetitive work. For example, 65.5 per cent of CSRs felt pressured by the repetitiveness of calls made. Indeed, all the CSRs who were interviewed regarded control systems within their workplace as inevitable and largely acceptable constraints and acknowledged that responding to calls entail some repetition. This is exemplified by the following quote:

*I know my calls are monitored and I don't really like that part of my job. You just put up with it. Many of the incoming calls are extremely tiresome and you do repeat yourself a lot so you think to yourself 'I could record my voice and just play it over the 'phone' and no-one would notice the difference'. At other times the calls are quite varied and you get a buzz coz you feel that you are doing something really useful.*

(CSR customer service in media)

Another CSR whose job entailed responding to inward calls (service) and making outbound calls (sales) commented:

*All my outward calls are incredibly repetitive and monotonous. I make these (calls) in the morning. I'm expected to make about 30-50 calls in four hours. I read from a script and sometimes it drives me mad. If it weren't for my team members I'd be in a straitjacket by now. The afternoon is much better because the advice you give differs from customer to customer. I like that much better even though you can see the queue (on the screen).*

Within the four call centres analysed there was evidence of CSR tasks being programmed and outputs being measured as part of the management control function thereby indicating that one of the main control mechanisms is based on control of output (Figure 2.1). CSR behaviour may also be controlled in part by both qualitative (how satisfactory was the



CSR/customer interaction) and quantitative criteria (frequency of all calls and the proportion of 'successful' calls) that may be used for appraisal and / or disciplinary purposes. Call monitoring is used extensively in all four call centres, much of which is undertaken by local line management and occasionally by team leaders themselves using the appropriate IT mechanisms. As a rule, local management inform CSRs that all calls are monitored, but in practice only a proportion of calls – around 5-10 calls per CSR during any given week – are so monitored. The pervasiveness of call monitoring is demonstrated by the survey results which suggest that nearly 40 per cent of CSR respondents feel pressured by this form of control. In commenting about the nature of call monitoring as a system of control, one line manager stated:

*Monitoring provides us with data on supply and demand of calls which is useful for manpower planning in terms of how many full and part-time workers we may need at any one time. It also gives us a good idea about who is on and off the 'phone and how long the downtime period was. This sort of information is given to team managers on a regular weekly basis and they can have a quiet word with any team member who is slacking.*

However, interview data suggests that many team leaders are unhappy and/or unwilling to undertake a disciplinary function in relation to team members. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the survey results demonstrate that team leaders are fairly highly regarded and often have the trust of their team members. This ambiguity of role can present a real dilemma for team leaders as the following comment illustrates:

*My team comes first every time but I do realise that when I do have to give bad news to a member like when he or she is not coming up to quota there may be suspicion and mistrust (on the part of the member). I do think this should be a line management job*



*and sometimes it is but it's not clear where the lines (of responsibility) are drawn. I try to find out the reason by being discreet and asking about family problems and that.*

A further control issue is the extent to which call centre managers consider monitoring results and CSR output as accurate measures of call centre productivity. Even though the call centres surveyed had performance indicators (which include downtime, throughput, frequency of calls taken and made), it is, in practice, difficult to assess the extent to which CSR behaviour, and in particular those behaviours of a qualitative nature measure up to these indicators. Part of the problem in this respect is that qualitative behaviour measures cannot easily be quantified and translated into financial data and hence were not deemed to be of serious consideration by top (corporate) management. One call centre manager commented:

*I know that company management don't act on the data. They probably don't know whether the data exists or not even though Information Services ask for it every quarter. I interpret the data and act on it when I can, but it's difficult to balance quality with quantity of the data. We are always asked to concentrate on frequency of calls and ensure calls are as short as possible but what does this say about customer service quality?*

With regard to the vertical control criteria identified in Figure 2.1, the results indicate that call centre control regimes are indeed as pervasive as some of the literature suggests and that technologically generated control and the monitoring of CSR behaviour may well encourage low trust relations between CSRs and local management. However, the results also suggest that the 'panoptic effect' is highly exaggerated, particularly in relation to the extent to which CSRs are able to exert control over their work operations.



#### **7.4 CSR Control over Work Operations**

Control over work operations for the purposes of this research concerns the degree of discretion CSRs have and perceive to have over their work and comprise the following factors:

- Time allowed to CSRs to engage in calls;
- The skills required to perform the requisite job-related tasks;
- The degree of influence CSRs have in the performance of their job;
- The sense of achievement CSRs perceive they have in relation to job performance;
- The degree of variety experienced;
- The degree of autonomy in job performance;
- The degree of influence over the range of tasks performed;
- The degree of influence over the pace at which CSRs work; and
- The degree of influence in the method(s) CSRs can adopt in performing their job.

The results reported in Chapter 6 indicate that respondents had some discretion with regard to the time allowed to satisfactorily engage in calls, were moderately satisfied with the skills attained in order to perform their job effectively, and had a degree of autonomy over their work operations. These positive factors are confirmed by a number of studies undertaken in a variety of call centre contexts (Bolton and Houlihan, 2005; Korkczynski, 2005, 2004, 2002; Korkczynski *et al.*, 2000). However, CSR responses to the other identified factors were less satisfactory and indicate ambivalence in their assessment of the extent of discretionary



control over their work operations. Many of the comments made during the interview schedules were consistent with this analysis:

*They give you enough time to deal with customer problems and I make sure that the customer understands how to deal with the problem even though some of them get on your tits. My team manager encourages us to spend as much time with a customer until the customer is satisfied. (CSR 'Media Co.')*

*When you contact a debtor you have to be prepared for abuse, insults and tantrums and that's where the skills training you've had come in handy. There's no script to read from as each case is different and it's difficult not to feel sorry for some of them but you can't let your feelings get in the way. You're a sort of counsellor but at the same time you have to make it clear that they owe money and they have to pay up or face the consequences. We talk about the calls in our team and have a bit of a laugh. It makes the job bearable. (CSR 'Money Back')*

*I get some kicks out of the job, I use my skills but what I say to the customer –there's no real choice. There's no variety and it's shit boring. I can't spend too much time with a customer as the system doesn't allow it. I'm just a human machine if you get my drift... (CSR 'Vortex')*

The factors, many of which are target-driven and which consistently indicate areas where operators exercise very little control over key aspects of task performance, include the lack of variety, the limited range of tasks performed, the high pace of work, monotony and boredom.



Within all four call centre workplaces, sustained efforts are made to measure operator output and performance including managerial initiatives aimed at assessing the quality of operator/customer interaction within a target driven milieu. This last point is important as some writers assume that management's ability to measure service and in particular call centre workers' outputs are limited especially 'insofar as service work encompasses aspects of quality in addition to productivity' (Frenkel *et al.*, 1999 : 139). Clearly, the simpler the task the easier it is to measure and therefore to control, thereby limiting the extent to which CSRs themselves can exert control over their own work activities.

The discussion of the research results in relation to control indicate that management and technological control is manifest and pervasive within the call centre workplace. Moreover, there appear to be certain pathological consequences of the exercise of such control upon the CSR workforce such as the relative inability to vary work effort over the course of a shift.

However, the extent to which CSRs exercise control over work operations given the relatively inflexible nature of work effort and the constraints imposed upon it, is somewhat compensated for by the fact that many CSRs are able to exercise varying degrees of control over call duration which was in evidence in all four call centres. In this context, Russell (2008) notes that with regard to his own research (Russell, 2002; 2004) together with that of Wray-Bliss (2001), the degree to which CSRs exercise control over call duration invariably depends upon the nature of the call and the extent to which each call is variable, the amount of work devoted to each call and the degree to which CSRs are responsible for whole jobs. Moreover, the extent of overall control as perceived and experienced by CSRs is also ameliorated by team members and the role of the customer/CSR relationship together with the nature of human resource practices which are considered later in this chapter. In addition, the alienation concept, as noted in Chapter 2, is partly associated with negative perceptions of power and control over work, and this is discussed in section 7.5



## **7.5 Alienation: Context and Discussion**

The concept of alienation, as referred to in Chapter 2, has been neglected in relation to call centre work. Yet the concept is inevitably associated with organisational power and control within the call centre workplace, and to this extent the structure/ agency debate discussed in Chapter 2 is crucial to understanding the complex workplace interactions and interrelationships of individuals and groups in call centres. The concept of alienation and its constituent components are addressed in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this thesis, subjective aspects of powerlessness as a result of excessive managerial and technological control over work, meaninglessness and self-estrangement were identified as the most significant factors within the call centre work milieu.

The alienation concept, often discussed within the structure/agency context, as referred to in Chapter 2, has an uneven history. The popularity of the concept which was primarily inspired by the research of Blauner (1964) has waned in recent years. For most researchers, the work of Marx (1970, 1975, 1976) has provided the theoretical underpinning as it relates directly to the labour process itself. For Marx (1975), alienation is the distortion and inversion of relationships that ought to obtain between workers within the employment relationship and the objects and activities of their labour and, as a consequence, between workers and their humanity. These distorted relationships produce a situation in which workers, rather than finding self-actualization in their labour, are objectified, devalued and impoverished as commodities and enslaved by the commodities they produce, and all the more so by the scope, complexity, and productivity of the industries in which they are engaged. According to Marx, alienation arises directly from the structure of capitalist production and particularly from the institution of private property, whereby the means (technologies, other inputs) and hence the products of labour are owned exclusively by members of the capitalist class.



Workers, owning nothing but their own productive capacities, are forced to sell those capacities to capitalists as commodities on the labour market; thus, their objects, tools, and labour time are not theirs to use in accordance with their own desires and needs, but are rather deployed by others to generate profits in which they do not share.

Blauners' (1964) optimistic prognosis that as workplace technology advanced and became less labour intensive, alienation would decline pre-dated the emergence of the call centre workplace and the subsequent paucity of research into new forms of work organisation such as the call centre workplace utilising the alienation concept is regrettable. The call centre workplace is an eminently appropriate context in which to re-examine alienation as it replicates in many ways the mass production industrial workplace. However, if alienation under this still relatively novel form of work organization is to be compared with that under industrial conditions, it is not sufficient to examine CSRs' reports of their subjective states, as similar states and reports may be produced by very different objective conditions. For example, a CSR may feel 'not in control' because she/he is subject to finely divided labour and hierarchical authority, or because she/he has too many projects and ill-defined responsibilities to manage (the latter being the least likely scenario). Thus, it is important to bring shifts in the relationships – such as CSR / customer relationships - that may propel subjective 'feeling states' of alienation from work, the workplace and, crucially, the organisation as a whole, into the foreground.

During the 1970s and 1980s, much of the research undertaken concerning alienated labour came to depart significantly from Marx's analysis. There was considerable conceptual and methodological debate as to whether alienation comprised either a state or a process and whether alienation was regarded as a subjective 'feeling state' and/ or an objective feature of the industrialised workplace regardless of whether workers 'feel' alienated or not (Erikson and Wharton 1997). Amidst this, many researchers, notably Seeman (1959) operationalised



the concept, enabling it to be measured using appropriate scales for constructs relating to perceived 'powerlessness', feelings of over-control, instrumental orientation, detachment from, and aversion to work and (lack of) job satisfaction.

## **7.6 Meaninglessness and Accommodatory Response**

Alienation is also associated with perceptions of meaning. According to Seeman (1959) and Blauner (1964), meaninglessness exists when the employee feels that there is little purpose in what he or she is doing at work, where they feel that they contribute little to the production process, and where jobs are narrowly defined and job tasks are negatively regarded as being unchallenging, repetitive and dull (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). Feelings of meaninglessness are more likely to prevail when other opportunities for involvement in work-based decisions are denied to the employee (Sarros *et al*, 2002).

Hence, whether work is considered either meaningful or meaningless is a fundamental issue in relation to the work of CSRs. A further theme concerned with alienation is that of 'reflexivity' or self-questioning, which is the ability to reflect upon the conditions of employee action and incorporate this knowledge into their conduct (Giddens 1982).

Reflexivity may also imply 'creativity' as evidenced from established studies of workplace behaviour concerning both creative and accommodatory responses on the part of individuals and groups over their 'alienated relations of production' (Eldridge, 1971, p.91). Within a call centre context, however, the opportunity to engage in some of these accommodatory responses are not so obviously open to CSRs owing to the nature of workplace surveillance technology. Indeed, the sweatshop approach appears to assume that accommodatory responses of any type are almost impossible to enact. However, as argued in Chapter 2, a critique of the sweatshop approach encapsulates the argument that despite the nature of



managerial and technological control CSRs have at least some scope to express themselves particularly through social interaction with team members and through their identification with customer service (Kinnie and Parsons, 2004; Callaghan and Thompson, 2001; Grugilis *et al*, 2001; Kinnie *et al*, 2000; Knights and McCabe, 1998).

### **7.7 Self-Estrangement, Emotional Dissonance, Humour and Bad Faith**

The self-estrangement dimension is concerned with the view that the work process is seen as alien to the individual employee and exists independently of his/her contributions to that process. Within the call centre workplace, self estrangement may manifest itself by a singular and exclusive attachment to extrinsic aspects of work, particularly where that work is not perceived as a 'central life interest' (Dubin, 1956). Indeed, the instrumental orientation ideal type, first identified by Lockwood (1966) and developed by Goldthorpe *et al* (1968) would appear to be a significant characteristic of self-estrangement and posits that the worker is calculatively involved in the workplace or organisation and does not regard work as a major source of self-fulfilment or self-realisation.

Calculative involvement, however, is not the sole manifestation of the self-estrangement dimension of alienation. Call centre work necessitates constant interactions with customers while regulating emotions at work in the interests of creating and maintaining positive customer relationships. Emotional labour is, therefore, an essential requirement in order to facilitate predictable CSR/customer interaction (Lewig and Dollard, 2003). However, there may be a certain degree of dysfunctionality when there is an experienced dissonance between felt and displayed emotions, or feeling and action. The dysfunctional manifestations of emotional dissonance include feelings of depression, cynicism and alienation from work,



particularly when the CSR fails to recognise or feel authentic emotions. (Lewig and Dollard, *op cit.*; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993).

The concept of 'bad faith', as noted in Chapter 2, is akin to both emotional labour and emotional dissonance. With regard to the CSR, bad faith manifests itself when organisationally required emotions influence customers' emotions which in turn influence CSR responses as anger, cynicism or humour. Humour, in particular, plays a significant role in how workers adjust to and challenge work circumstances (Watson, 2004; Radcliffe-Brown, 1965), and has long been recognised as a form of accommodatory behaviour (Collinson, 2002, 1988; Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999). Within the research context of the four call centres investigated, humour was found to be not only an accommodatory response on the part of CSRs to emotional dissonance, but was also regarded by CSRs as providing and facilitating temporary relief from boredom and routine. Ackroyd and Thompsons' categorisation of humour into clowning, teasing and satirical forms provides a framework for analysing and observing manifestations of humour within the four call centres.

## **7.8 Alienation: Discussion of Results**

The results of the questionnaire survey concerning alienation appear in Chapter 6. The relevant tables to consider are Tables 6.15; 6.16; 6.17; 6.18; and 6.19. Interviews with CSRs also include three questions with an alienation component. These are: 'Has work any meaning for you?'; 'How do you view your relationship with customers?' and 'Does humour and 'having fun' feature in the work that you do?' The survey responses are concerned with subjective perceptions of work characteristics and pressure (Tables 6.15; 6.16), organisational characteristics and customer identification (Tables 6.17; 6.18). Overall, responses to the item questions are predominantly neutral (Table 6.19). However, this masks considerable



differences between responses to individual items. For example, the pressure to make as many calls as possible was highly felt, and this links into the previous discussion concerning control. Indeed, alienation is regarded as a feeling state engendered by 'over-control' and relatively high-pressured work (Seeman, 1959; Blauner, 1964) and the results confirm this to some extent at least. However relatively high levels of alienation on control and pressure measures are not reflected in the responses to questions concerning customers where alienation levels are largely neutral. Rather, dealing with customers is regarded by many CSRs as 'playing the game'.

As CSRs, by definition, constantly interact with customers, the issues of emotional dissonance humour and 'bad faith' feature prominently in the interview responses. Keeping a social distance from the customer is normal organisational procedure, often aided by 'the script'. Most CSRs are obliged to provide their first name (although, interestingly, at 'Media Co.' CSRs are told to choose a first name which need not be their own, and stick to it) which imparts a degree of social affability. To be sure, departures from the script are necessary, if not desirable, as far as inbound service enquiries are concerned and this gives some leeway on the part of the CSR to engage in discourse within the time constraints imposed by queuing systems. When the scripting rules are interpreted as being flexible there is some opportunity for CSRs to interpret and improvise, perhaps injecting within the discourse a verbal 'act' or as Sartre puts it 'verbal theatre'. This phenomenon is a variant on 'bad faith' which is part of the self-estrangement dimension of alienation. In essence, the CSR's service interaction requires the presentation of a desirable demeanour and creating an appealing emotional climate. In order to achieve this, CSRs manipulate their own emotions and those of the customer within the rules set by their organisation (Bolton and Houlihan, 2005). To a large extent, interviews with CSRs concerning this phenomenon exemplify this aspect of alienation. For example, one CSR from 'Media Co' states:



*Most customers are ok. They want service but at the same time they want to connect with you as a human being. When I give them my first name many of them want to be pally with you. Sometimes I play along with this even though I know I shouldn't. When I asked one customer to verify her date of birth which she gave as the 1<sup>st</sup> of April I said 'well it takes all sorts'. I know I shouldn't have said this but it's a reaction against the tedium and monotony of the job. Thank God I'm on a short term contract and that the call wasn't monitored.*

Many interview responses commented upon the 'rude customer syndrome'. Often this is welcomed by CSRs as a diversion from the 'boring' customer. From the organisational management's perspective, CSRs are reminded that customers are 'number one' and that quality of service is paramount. Of the four call centres researched, the managements in three centres continually reminded CSRs to keep calls short and simple and especially with regard to sales, there was a tendency for CSRs to overpromise, to close off options or to minimise help. This would tend to result in a proportion of customers to call back and complain. One CSR (Vortexia) commented:

*Abusive customers are part of the course. Sometimes I don't know how to handle them. We don't get training for that. I get customers who are really rude and sarcastic and I feel like telling them to bugger off. Of course I can't but it's the total ignorance of customers who haven't read their policy. Then I get to think what's it all about? I really want to say to them (customers) f..k off. One day I might do that.*

The pleasure and pain of interaction with customers often produces accommodatory responses which have been widely interpreted as the 'sovereign' customer as aggressor and the CSR as victim of the service provision system (Bolton and Houlihan, 2005). These accommodatory responses often take the form of humour. Ackroyd and Thompson's (1999)



categorisation of humour into clowning, teasing and satirical typologies as discussed previously is pertinent here. These types of humour take place within the CSR work team. Clowning is rare but satire is common. Humour may function as relief from boredom and routine, as an attempt to subvert and erode the authority of the team leader and express itself as cynicism directed at local call centre management. Most manifestations of humour within the four call centres appeared to be responses to difficult CSR/customer interactions. One CSR commented:

*Having a bit of a laugh and a joke with team mates is the only thing that keeps me going. We exchange stories of nasty customers and that gives us a lift.*

Another stated that:

*A lot of people (CSRs) are unhappy. People come and go and those who go can't take it anymore. The new ones are enthusiastic and bright-eyed but that soon passes. I don't know how much longer I'll be here. Maybe after my next (appraisal) interview I will leave. It's shitty. The humorous ones and jokers make life sort of tolerable.*

Meaninglessness is described as the CSRs' perception and description of the extent to which they are or are not integrated into and contribute little to the work process (Mottaz, 1981; Horton, 1964), when their jobs are narrow in scope, dull, boring and unchallenging (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Hackman and Lawler, 1971). Meaninglessness as a component of alienation remains neglected in extant call centre literature as Russell's (2008) review of that literature implies. The interview question concerning meaninglessness yielded mixed responses. Most responses were neutral, probably indicating some ambivalence in the interpretation of the CSR role and the strictures, either real or perceived upon flexibility and creativity in the performance of that role. For many, the team members provided some relief



from routine and some CSRs commented upon positive experiences with customers. Most, however commented on the routine and monotonous nature of their front-line work. For example one CSR stated:

*It depends what you mean by 'meaning'. I get a lot of satisfaction from my team mates when we can chat with each other in breaks or when we go out for a drink after work. That's got a lot of meaning for me and makes the job bearable. It's just impersonal with customers and often I feel sorry for them because they often get a raw deal. When it comes to looking at stuff piling up on the screen you think 'I have to do the same thing with each of these all day long. In that case my work doesn't have any meaning to me at all.*

A further aspect of alienation to be considered is what is termed 'organisational alienation'. The framework for analysis owes much to the well-known typology of 'involvement' identified by Etzioni (1961). The three types of involvement are known as 'moral', 'calculative' and 'alienative'. According to Etzioni, involvement ranges on a scale from intensely negative to intensely positive. Of interest here is alienative involvement which 'is at the intensely negative end and denotes dissociation from the organisation by its members', (Pugh and Hickson, 2007, p. 168). Table 6.17, which is also used to identify organisational commitment levels, indicates that although the responses are mixed, CSRs experienced higher degrees of alienation than non-alienation from the organisation and employer, but that, overall alienation levels were moderate. CSRs, therefore, are neither intensely negative nor intensely positive towards their organisation. The main reason for this, it is suggested, is that within large call centres located in larger organisations, the larger organisation and senior management may be regarded by CSRs being too remote to identify with (Russell, 2008). This issue is discussed further in section 7.9 onwards.



## 7.9 Commitment: Context

The commitment concept in general and as applied to the call centre workplace is reviewed in Chapter 3. Commitment is concerned with the degree of involvement and/or ‘bonding’ between individual employee and the employing organisation, often using terms such as ‘allegiance’, ‘loyalty’ and ‘attachment’ (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Moreover, much of the prescriptive HRM literature emphasises that the nature of this commitment should be ‘positive’ or ‘high’ (Morrow and McElroy, 1986; Cohen, 1993, 2000; Frenkel *et al*, 1999; Hutchinson, Purcell and Kinnie, 2000). Other commitment labels relating to work groups, managers, customers, occupations, professions and union are also used and may be considered as separate but cognitively related foci which are differentiated from organisational commitment (Reichers, 1985; Becker, 1992; Meyer and Allen, 1997). Meyer and Allen (1997) provide support for a degree of differentiation between organisational commitment and other commitment foci by stating that:

*Organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct is distinguishable from other forms of workplace commitment (and that) commitment to each constituency contributes to employees’ overall commitment to the organisation. (p. 16)*

It may, therefore, be argued that commitment comprises multiple constituencies, which are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Cohen, 2000; Hislop, 2002; Freund and Carmeli, 2003; Redman and Snape, 2005; Cohen, 2007; Conway and Monks, 2009). The multi-dimensionality of commitment is evident in both its nature and focus whereby the former (nature) encompasses, for example, the Meyer and Allen (1997) categorisation of normative, continuance and affective while the latter (focus) incorporates a hierarchy of foci extending from ‘local’ (work related and also described as ‘work commitment’) to ‘global’ foci (organisational level and also known as ‘organisational



commitment') that include in order of ascendancy, job involvement, the team, team leader, workplace management, the workplace itself, involvement and participation in workplace decision-making, the wider organisation and its management. Within the call centre context, an additional commitment focus at local level is 'the customer'.

### **7.10 Commitment: Discussion of Results**

The results concerning commitment are described in Chapter 6, Tables 6.20 – 6.26. Tables 6.20, 6.21 and 6.22 describe attitudes towards commitment with regard to work-related factors, organisational factors and senior management in an organisation-wide context. Table 6.20 describes feelings of 'liking' at local level. The results comprising the wider organisational factors, described in Tables 6.21 and 6.22, relate to the 'global' context of commitment. Tables 6.23, 6.24 and 6.25 are concerned with the extent to which call centre workers view their relationships, in terms of commitment, with local call centre management, their team leaders / managers and customers and are mainly 'local' contexts. It is important to note in this context that a number of established commitment models (Morrow, 1983; Mathieu and Zajac (1990); Randall and Cote, 1991; Cohen, 1999) assume that many of the components comprising work or local commitment are antecedents of organisational commitment and this is only partly supported by the results data. Within the context of the four call centres investigated this association of antecedents with organisational commitment is, however, tempered by the nature and extent of call monitoring and the monthly quality assessment meetings drawing on monitoring data which can be used both punitively by invoking the disciplinary procedure for consistent under-performers, and as a skills development device for those who meet and exceed targets.



The results provide indicators of commitment levels of the CSR respondents. Of interest is the high level of emotional attachment or affective commitment to the team and team members. To be sure, work teams in call centres are not created in order to facilitate social relations (Mulholland, 2002) Indeed, call centre work, being relatively solitary and individualised, is not necessarily dependent upon integrated work teams for the pursuance and achievement of work goals and individual targets (Russell, 2008). In the four call centres surveyed, teams are used by local management to foster competition amongst them, with individual and team output measured against target levels and displayed on weekly poster boards placed adjacent to teams' working areas. This results in what has been referred to as 'teams without teamwork' (van den Broek, 2002) or 'team Taylorism' (Bain and Taylor, 2000; Baldry *et al*, 1998). Given these constraints with regard to the team focus, affective commitment may exist not only within the constraints of the work situation but may also be explained by external social activities. A number of CSRs commented on these aspects of teamwork. With regard to relationships with team members, one CSR commented:

*I hardly have any chance to speak to my team members except during breaks. I regard myself as being friends with at least six people in my team. We have a laugh and a joke whenever we can and we go out to the pub or have a meal around once a fortnight*

Another CSR commented on the restricted nature of social interaction within the team, team member turnover and team leadership.

*A lot of team members leave. It's like 'here today, gone tomorrow'. I've been here for 18 months so I reckon I'm the longest staying member. I get on well with most team mates but you can't form long friendships and the work doesn't allow this to happen anyway. The team leaders change a lot so you can't have any social relationship with*



*them. Most team leaders try to get friendly but at the end of the day its targets and sales and dealing with the highest number of customers that matters.*

The results concerning local management present a marginally negative to neutral view of local management indicating low levels of commitment relating to many items (Table 6.23).

Local or call centre management within the call centres researched have similar job descriptions and are responsible for the daily running and management of their call centre through the effective use of resources directed towards meeting, and possibly setting, customer service targets as well as planning areas of improvement or development. Call centre managers ensure that calls are answered by staff within agreed time scales and in an appropriate manner. The two larger centres researched have small management teams to assist with supervision, appraisals, recruitment and training.

As described in Chapter 6, the results within Table 6.23 indicate that negatively viewed items in relation to local management comprise 'remoteness', responding to suggestions, commenting and keeping employees up-to-date about proposed changes, the employment relationship, skills development and family responsibilities. Relatively low levels of affective commitment are evidenced despite local managers being observable and operating within the confines of the call centre workplace. The notion of 'distance' is a pertinent one, as physical distance (the extent to which a CSR is physically near or far from local management or colleagues) and cognitive distance defined as the cognitive immediacy and importance that the employee associates with a commitment focus (Redman and Snape, 2005) may be factors which influence commitment levels. For example, as the discussion concerning control indicates (7.1-7.3), local managers are closely associated and involved with CSRs with regard to output-oriented behaviour and as such may be regarded as 'agents' of senior organisation-wide management. In this instance, CSRs usually have limited contact with senior management and would regard senior (organisational) management values as being remote



from their own, thereby attributing the values of senior management to local management.

Interview responses typically reflect these concerns. One CSR commented|:

*Our managers keep on about targets and the need to achieve them so that it benefits the customer and Media Co. So I don't think our managers act in our best interests and just serve the purposes of the company. We are often kept in the dark about any changes that are made and the only time we see them is for our interviews and assessments.*

With regard to the customer relationship, CSRs' responses are largely positive, demonstrating higher levels of affective commitment with the exception of views concerning abusive and difficult customers. The responses are described in Table 6.25. Notwithstanding the alienative aspects of the CSR/customer relationship, discussed in 7.7, the majority of service encounters appear to be, within the constraints of managerial and technical control systems, mutually satisfactory. The results confirm those of a number of studies, such as the influential research of Frenkel *et al*, (1998) which do not base their theoretical premises exclusively upon labour process theory. Frenkel *et al* found that, particularly within the service work flows of call centres, CSRs 'were socialised to identify with customers' interests and were expected to demonstrate such empathy in interacting with customers. Within three of the four call centres surveyed for this thesis, customer service skills were an important aspect of initial skills training for new CSRs, with an emphasis upon 'empathy training' and role plays. In interviews, CSRs often stressed the importance of 'looking at it the way the customer does' and 'I enjoy helping and satisfying customers'. However the phenomenon of the 'rude customer' tended to act as a deterrent to further improvement of the relationship. In addition, some CSRs were less sanguine about their dealings with customers. One CSR commented:



*I just can't be positive about dealing with customers when the whole thrust is towards targets and time*

Organisational or global commitment is measured by selected items from Meyer and Allens' (1997) affective, continuance and normative commitment scales. The wording of some items has been adapted to facilitate understanding. With regard to organisational commitment (Table 6.21) only two items – knowing the values of the organisation and sharing those values - demonstrated marginally positive commitment. Respondents demonstrated an absence of commitment to 'senior management' in relation to feelings of remoteness, lack of communication and lack of concern for what employees are doing (Table 6.22). On the other hand there was a desire on the part of respondents to learn more about the activities of senior management. Hence, the results indicate that global commitment to organisation and senior management is generally weak or low. Cognitive and spatial distance may be factors which offer a partial explanation. A more credible explanation would lie in CSRs belief that the larger organisation does not effectively communicate its values and policies. There is some evidence to suggest that pluralistic ignorance of HRM policies and practices impact negatively upon commitment (Kinnie *et al*, 2005; Conway and Monks, 2009). HRM practices in relation to other hypothesis constructs are discussed in 7.11.

The survey instrument and responses to interview questions concerning loyalty and commitment to the organisation and views concerning senior organisational management tend to reinforce established research findings. A representative comment made by a CSR was:

*I don't know who senior management are and I don't really care. I don't trust them.*

*All I know about the organisation is that we have targets to achieve and that we have to be nice to customers.*



A framework developed from the results and discussion of commitment levels is presented below. The four call centres surveyed straddle the minimal and moderate commitment columns.

**Figure 7.2: A Commitment Framework**

<b>Commitment foci</b>	<b>Minimal commitment (Regimented)</b>	<b>Moderate Commitment (Informed)</b>	<b>High commitment (Empowered)</b>
<b>WORK</b>	Intensification of work; extreme quantification of performance; numerical flexibility; no management onus for skills development; extrinsic factors paramount.	Less emphasis on quantification and more on quality; some skills specific staff development; appraisal interviews facilitative	Work is intrinsically rewarding within a learning environment of continuous skills development.
<b>TEAM</b>	Teams may not exist; where they do, they are used as a punitive means of increasing performance; some social interaction	Teams regarded as desirable for motivation and setting of targets to improve morale; intra-team satisfaction dependent on quality of team leader	Team members mutually supportive and highly participative
<b>LOCAL MANAGEMENT</b>	Ever present monitoring, surveillance and discipline, both electronic and otherwise, used punitively; spatially proximate but cognitively distant	Electronic monitoring used for both punitive and developmental purposes; some communication and involvement; some facilitative HRMPs	Background checks to facilitate discretionary skills; open, informative and receptive
<b>CUSTOMER</b>	Emphasis upon quantity makes for highly unsatisfactory customer relationships; mismatch between productivity requirements and customer satisfaction; emotional dissonance and bad faith	Changing focus upon quality rather than quantity; more time for customers means improved emotional labour and greater customer satisfaction	Intrinsically and positively rewarding and challenging
<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Distrust and fear of senior management; no input into any area of decision-making; downward communication only; no trade unions; little communication of organisational values	Some HRM Ps concerning involvement and employee decision-making concerning work. Appraisal used developmentally and not punitively. Moderate commitment levels	Highly committed, involved and empowered.
<b>IMPLICATIONS AND OUTCOMES</b>	Commitment levels across foci weak or low; very high levels of absenteeism and turnover; HRM policy and practices implications; no HCPS	Moderate or strong relationship between certain elements of local and global commitment; moderate to high absenteeism and turnover; HCPs may exist but not necessarily congruent with employee commitment; management of commitment implications	Highly positive; congruence of all relationship elements; low absenteeism and turnover; high trust discretion and satisfaction; HRM policies and procedures effectively communicated



## **7.11 Satisfaction: Context**

In Chapter 2, certain assumptions were made concerning satisfaction within the call centre context. The main assumption is that satisfaction, like commitment, is multi-dimensional and should not be considered in isolation as if it were the sole criterion of job quality. Rather, an evaluation of satisfaction should take into consideration a number of objective aspects of work (Green, 2006; Brown *et al*, 2007; Brown *et al*, 2008). A further assumption is that satisfaction may be measured across a range of items and features in work and jobs that influence the workers' level of satisfaction with it. These normally include attitudes towards pay, working conditions, co-workers and team leaders, career prospects and intrinsic aspects of work (Locke, 1976). The discussion of the survey results from the four call centres focuses upon many of these items. Additional items associated with perceptions of satisfaction include extrinsic factors, pressure and human resource practices and are considered further in 7.2.

## **7.12 Satisfaction: Discussion of Results**

The results for satisfaction are described in Chapter 6. The constructs comprising satisfaction and those constructs associated with satisfaction, together with the titles and numbers of the corresponding tables are summarised in Table 7.1.

### **7.12.1 Satisfaction: Work and Job Pressure**

Respondents identify varying degrees of dissatisfaction concerning 17 items describing work characteristics (Table 6.38), including the requirement to work hard; pressure to make or take calls; calls being monitored; too much management and technological control over work; lack of variety; pay, bonuses and fringe benefits. Respondents are satisfied or marginally satisfied in relation to ten items, in particular to those items concerning team and team leader



relationships. Responses to a separate question dealing with job pressure (Table 6.39) reveal that ten of the eleven items scored highly on the scale indicating that for these items, respondents experience relatively high levels of pressure, and by inference, low levels of satisfaction. The items which are particularly characterised by high pressure levels include ‘pressured by targets’ (76.9 per cent); ‘pressured by difficult customers’ (69 per cent) ‘pressured by the repetitiveness of calls made’ (65.5 per cent) and ‘pressured by monitoring’ (62.2 per cent).

**Table 7.1 Results Categories for Satisfaction**

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>QUESTION</i>	<i>TABLE NUMBER</i>
<b>SATISFACTION AND WORK</b>	<b>Attitudes Towards Work-Related Characteristics</b>	<b>TABLE 6.38</b>
<b>JOB PRESSURE</b>	<b>Attitudes Towards Job-Related Pressure</b>	<b>TABLE 6.39</b>
<b>HRM PRACTICES</b>		
<i>Consultation and related issues</i>	<b>Attitudes Towards Consultation</b>	<b>TABLE 6.40</b>
<i>Communication</i>	<b>HRM Practices and Communication</b>	<b>TABLE 6.41</b>
<i>Skills and training</i>	<b>Skills and Training</b>	<b>TABLE 6.42</b>
<b>PERSONAL, PHYSICAL AND TEAM CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>Attitudes Towards Personal, Physical and Team Characteristics</b>	<b>TABLE 6.43</b>
<b>TEAM LEADER/MANAGER AND CUSTOMER CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>Attitudes Towards Team Management and Customers</b>	<b>TABLE 6.44</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL CONSTRUCTS ASSOCIATED WITH SATISFACTION</b>		
<b>INTRINSIC FACTORS</b>	<b>Attitudes Towards Intrinsic Work Factors</b>	<b>TABLE 6.46</b>
<b>EXTRINSIC FACTORS</b>	<b>Attitudes Towards Extrinsic Factors</b>	<b>TABLE 6.52</b>

Much of the earlier research studies, particularly the early work of Taylor and Bain (2003, 2001, 1999), Bain and Taylor (2000) emphasise the technology dependent and routinised nature of much call centre work and tend to focus upon the negative consequences upon the CSR of technological and managerial control systems and flows. Other research studies which do not utilise labour process theory as a main theoretical perspective emphasise the



nature of the CSR – customer relationship which is potentially facilitative and empowering (Frenkel *et al*, 1999). Later studies consider the impact of high performance work systems (HPWS) and human resource management practices upon certain attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (Brown *et al*, 2008, Rose and Wright, 2005; Deery *et al*, 2004). One of the areas the latter category of studies focus upon to a greater extent than earlier studies is satisfaction and the results of this thesis concerning satisfaction largely support the findings of these research studies. For example, Rose and Wright (2005) produce evidence to the effect that target and emotional pressures associated with call centre work contribute to poor job satisfaction while Deery *et al*, (2004) argue that high workloads, work pressure and routinisation contribute to negative levels of satisfaction. Interview responses concerning satisfaction are fairly consistent in identifying those factors which contribute to negative satisfaction and those which are inherently satisfying. One CSR stated:

*The only satisfaction I get is when I get to speak to my team mates or when a customer appreciates my efforts. I can't pretend I like the other parts of the job. It's the routine, the boredom and the calls piling up that gets to me. It's very stressful.*

### **7.12.2 Satisfaction: Human Resource Management Practices (HRMPs)**

The HRPs considered in relation to satisfaction are information and consultation, communication and training and skills. With regard to consultation the results indicate an absence of consultation with regard to eliciting workers' views on future plans, staffing and redundancy, changes to work procedures, pay issues and health and safety. However, responses were marginally positive concerning dealing with work-related problems, fair treatment and keeping CSRs informed (but not consulted) about proposed changes in the workplace. In relation to skills and training, responses indicate awareness amongst



respondents that different types of skills concerning the job, customers, products and services are important but that the quality of skills training and the frequency of skills training are deficient, particularly with regard to the need for more training after the initial training period and more time spent on staff training generally.

There was no evidence from any of the four call centres researched of high commitment management practices of the type considered, for example by Hutchinson *et al*, (2000). There is, however, some evidence that the general incidence of HRMPs has declined in recent years. Brown *et al*, (2008) in reviewing evidence from the Workplace Employment Relations Survey concerning changes in HRM and job satisfaction during the period 1998-2004 argue that: 'The incidence of many HRM practices has declined....HRM practices have had little effect on the changes in satisfaction' (p. 238). Moreover, Kinnie *et al*, (2005) argue that a distinction needs to be drawn between intended or espoused HR policies and their enactment in the form of HRMPs by line managers and team leaders. They go on to state: 'Employee attitudes are influenced not so much by the way these policies are intended to operate as by the way they are actually implemented by line managers and team leaders on a day-to-day basis' (p. 10).

The relative absence of consultative practices is indicated by the CSR survey responses. The results are not unsurprising given the paucity of representation and the absence of a collective voice mechanism. Upward communication did not appear to be a significant consultative process for many CSRs and this issue arose frequently in the interview responses. However, the downward communication of information was regarded positively by a small majority of CSRs, particularly in cases where team leaders were given the responsibility for dissemination, additionally to the normal formal channels. A typical CSR comment raised these concerns:



*We get enough information about performance targets and changes in assessment interviews and that sort of thing. When it comes from Joan (team leader) it gives a human touch to it. We don't get asked for our views and we don't have a say in anything. A lot of our ideas about improving things just get ignored by them (management)*

With regard to skills and training, most CSRs felt that training after the initial period was generally inadequate. Call centres generally often use low skilled labour, reflecting the routine and standardised nature of CSRs' or agents' work (IDS 2008) and the four call centres researched were no exception to this. However, the possibility of multi-skilling (a more recent euphemism for the earlier Herzbergian term 'job enlargement') exists for those CSRs wishing to take it up, notwithstanding that excelling in a multiplicity of low level skills does not necessarily equate with the acquisition of higher level skills. Hence, the demands of call centre work require varying degrees of relatively low-level skill along the diverse types of knowledge (Frenkel *et al*, 1998, 1999), cognitive and communicative flexibility, emotional labour (Taylor and Tyler, 2001) and endurance (Thompson and Callaghan, 2002), albeit at a fairly basic level. To a considerable extent, these skills can be standardised (reading from a 'script') but this has limited application to unpredictable and complex customer queries, the unexpected question, undefined problem or other verbal distractions introduced by the customer (Holtgrewe and Kerst, 2002). Most 'in house' call centres in the financial services sector have quite elaborate recruitment and coaching procedures with the average induction process taking three to four weeks during which both generic and job relevant skills are developed. This is commonly backed up by periodic training updates to reinforce and modify knowledge and skills where necessary much of this being done 'on the job' with assessments provided by the team leader and taken up in formal monthly appraisals.



### **7.12.3 Satisfaction: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors**

With regard to intrinsic factors Table 6.46, Chapter 6, is concerned with attitudes towards intrinsic aspects of work. Intrinsic factors are involve those aspects of respondents' work which are integral to the job and include items concerning intrinsic aspects of satisfaction, the customer, products and services, the technology worked with, influence, variety and autonomy. The results indicate that respondents would like more job-related skills, more variety, a greater sense of achievement, more influence over the range of tasks, pace of work and work methods. On the other hand, respondents are relatively satisfied with some aspects of their training, the customers, encouragement from team leader and esteem from fellow team workers. Table 6.52, Chapter 6, describes responses to extrinsic factors and include those items which influence work operations but which are not part of the tasks which comprise respondents' jobs. Of the 26 items describing extrinsics, eleven items are positively regarded by respondents. These include relationships with local and team management, the workplace itself, and physical work conditions. Negatively viewed items include call monitoring, control over work, job security, promotion and pay and pay-related factors.

The absence of satisfaction with regard to the intrinsics of job-related skills, more variety, a greater sense of achievement, more influence over the range of tasks, pace of work and work methods is well documented within the call centre literature and more generally (Russell, 2008; Brown *et al* (2008). With regard to extrinsics, job security, promotion and pay were least satisfying to CSRs. Again, this is reflected in the wider literature. It could be argued that some of the HRMPs considered earlier might impact positively upon some extrinsics such as pay. Brown *et al*, for example, found that 'some HRM variables do have a positive effect. Working in an establishment where there is training covering teamworking, communication skills or problem solving has a positive effect on satisfaction with pay'. However, the evidence for this in the survey results for this thesis is inconclusive. Overall, the results



concerning intrinsic and extrinsics conform more readily to those of a comprehensive earlier study of concerning an evaluation of work design and well-being psychosocial risk factors in call centres (Sprigg *et al*, 2003; Sprigg *et al*, 2006) who found that when compared with other call centre employees, CSRs report the lowest levels of overall job satisfaction, and intrinsic job satisfaction is particularly low when compared to other benchmark groups while CSRs report average levels of extrinsic satisfaction.

### **7.13 Brief Discussion of Hypothesis Outcomes**

The results of the research hypotheses are described in Chapter 6. The hypotheses are described below and are then grouped according to the dependent variable and main construct as presented in Table 7.2.

#### **Hypothesis 1**

That customer/CSR interaction, loyalty to employer, satisfaction with team leader and human resource practices are positively associated with commitment.

#### **Hypothesis 2**

That satisfaction is positively associated with commitment.

#### **Hypothesis 3**

That intention to quit is negatively associated with commitment

#### **Hypothesis 4**

That alienation and satisfaction are negatively associated with each other

#### **Hypothesis 5**

That management and technological control is positively associated with alienation

#### **Hypothesis 6**



That loyalty to organisation is negatively associated with alienation

**Hypothesis 7**

That management and technological control is negatively associated with satisfaction

**Hypothesis 8**

That team leader satisfaction, intra team relations, intrinsics, extrinsics, involvement, customer/CSR interaction, CSR control over work are positively associated with satisfaction

**Hypothesis 9**

That alienation is negatively associated with commitment

**Hypothesis 10**

That human resource practices are positively associated with commitment

**Table 7.2 Hypotheses Clustered by Main Construct as Dependent Variable**

<i>HYPOTHESIS CLUSTER 1</i>	<i>MAIN CONSTRUCT</i>	<i>OUTCOME</i>
HYPOTHESIS 1	COMMITMENT	SUPPORTED
HYPOTHESIS 2	COMMITMENT	SUPPORTED
HYPOTHESIS 3	COMMITMENT	SUPPORTED
HYPOTHESIS 9	COMMITMENT	SUPPORTED
HYPOTHESIS 10	COMMITMENT	PARTIALLY SUPPORTED
<i>HYPOTHESIS CLUSTER 2</i>	<i>MAIN CONSTRUCT</i>	<i>OUTCOME</i>
HYPOTHESIS 5	ALIENATION	SUPPORTED
HYPOTHESIS 6	ALIENATION	SUPPORTED
<i>HYPOTHESIS CLUSTER 3</i>	<i>MAIN CONSTRUCT</i>	<i>OUTCOME</i>
HYPOTHESIS 4	SATISFACTION	SUPPORTED
HYPOTHESIS 7	SATISFACTION	SUPPORTED
HYPOTHESIS 8	SATISFACTION	SUPPORTED



### **7.13.1 Hypothesis Cluster 1**

Hypothesis 1 is concerned with the association between local commitment foci and global commitment. In all cases, commitment was found to be either moderate (one case) or moderate to low. Hence the relationship between local and global commitment is positive, that is, all four variables make a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of commitment (Chapter 6, Table 6.52) This is largely confirmed by Meyer and Allen's (1997) review of the literature concerning local and global aspects of commitment and to a substantial degree that of Redman and Snape (2005). It should be noted, however that 'there is surprisingly little research exploring the links between attitudes to HR practices and commitment' (Conway and Monks, 2009), despite the fact that relationships between both are depicted in many models displaying the HRM-performance linkage (Guest, 1997; Paauwe and Richardson, 2007). With regard to the association of satisfaction with commitment (hypothesis 2), Table 6.53 demonstrates that satisfaction explains 72.0 per cent of the variance in commitment and that there is a positive association between the two construct variables. While it is not the intention for the purpose of this thesis to establish causal relationships between the two sets of variable, it should be emphasised that studies examining the nature of the relationship between satisfaction and commitment were relatively rare (Elangovan, 2000) and there is no consensus as to whether satisfaction or commitment are causally related either as dependent or as independent variables. Within the context of the four call centres researched for this thesis the positive association between satisfaction and commitment has been demonstrated and is given support by the research of Frenkel *et al*, (1999) which argues that lower levels of CSR satisfaction is associated with lower levels of commitment.

Hypothesis 3 is concerned with the association between intention to quit and commitment.

Table 6.54, Chapter 6, demonstrates that intention to quit explains 54.5 per cent of the



variance in commitment with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a moderate association between the two constructs. Call centres generally have high rates of annual turnover averaging around 23-24 % nationally (IDS 2008). Within the four call centres researched, turnover approaches the national average. The expectation of a large proportion of CSRs is of a prior orientation of short-term employment which fosters a 'culture of turnover' (IDS 2008) and which, arguably, would impact upon most facets of the call centre work relationship. The results accord with those of Elangovan (2000), and with much earlier studies (Williams and Hazer, 1986; Steers, 1977; Porter *et al*, 1974;).

Table 6.60 (Chapter 6) provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable alienation on commitment, the dependent variable. The analysis demonstrates that alienation explains 73.8 per cent per cent of the variance in commitment with a significance value of .000, hence indicating a moderate association between the two constructs. There is no extant research which links both constructs in this area, and this presents problems of generalising the results to call centre work in a national and international context. Hypothesis 10 explores the association between HRMPs and commitment. Table 6.61 (Chapter 6) provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable, HRMPs on commitment the dependent variable. The analysis demonstrates that human resource practices explains 78.1 per cent per cent of the variance in commitment with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a moderate association between the two constructs. Employee views and reactions concerning the functional role of HRMPs in relation to training, involvement etc may reflect and reinforce the wider organisational values and culture (Kinnie *et al*, 2005; Bowen and Ostroff, 2004). Employee reactions should they be positive, connect with affective global commitment, often mediated by local management (Redman and Snape, 2005), and 'lead to better or more discretionary behaviour and improved task performance' (Kinnie *et al*, p. 11). Here, the central assumption



is that HRMPs are viewed by employees as a 'personalised' commitment to them by the organisation which is then reciprocated back to the organisation by employees through positive attitudes and behaviour (Hannah and Iverson, 2004: 339). While this positive relationship may exist within the context of professional work as Kinnie *et al* suggest, this appears not to be the case in relation to CSRs surveyed for this thesis. Owing to the nature of the CSR work situation, ambivalence to customer and local management, some negatively viewed and experienced HRMPs and relatively weak or low local commitment (with some exceptions), local commitment is neither personalised nor reciprocated back to the global organisation in any positive sense.

### **7.13.2 Hypothesis Cluster 2**

With regard to hypothesis 5, Table 6.56 (Chapter 6) provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable management and technological control on alienation, the dependent variable and demonstrates that management and technological control explains 60.7 per cent of the variance in alienation with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a strong association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square analysis is confirmed, thus supporting hypothesis 5. The discussion of the results concerning the control and alienation constructs in sections 7.2-7.8 reveals that management and technological control is an important structural constraint upon CSR behaviour and that perceptions of 'over-control' in vertical control relationships and the ambivalent nature of the CSR /customer relationship involving emotional dissonance and 'bad faith' is linked to alienation. The literature dealing with control in call centres and front-line service work does not, however, establish links between the two constructs.



Hypothesis 6 Table 6.57 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable loyalty to organisation on alienation, the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that loyalty to organisation explains 71.5 per cent of the variance in alienation with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a strong association between the two constructs. The direction of the relationship between the two variables using chi-square analysis is confirmed, thus supporting hypothesis 6. The loyalty construct contains items which are also measured by the commitment construct. The main component of alienation germane to hypothesis 6 is 'organisational alienation' and Etzioni's (1961) 'alienative involvement' defined as 'dissociation from the organisation by its members' (p. 67). Loyalty to organisation is fairly low and this is reflected in the results for organisational alienation whereby CSRs experienced higher degrees of alienation than non-alienation from the organisation and employer.

### **7.13.3 Hypothesis Cluster 3**

Hypotheses 4, 7 and 8 relate to the satisfaction construct. Hypothesis 4 results are described in Tables 6.55 and 6.56 (Chapter 6) and provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable satisfaction on alienation the dependent variable and satisfaction as the independent variable on alienation. The statistics demonstrate that satisfaction explains 65.7 per cent of the variance in alienation with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a strong association between the two constructs (Table 6.55), and that alienation explains 65.7 per cent of the variance in satisfaction with a significance value of .000, again indicating a strong association between the two. The discussion of the results concerning the alienation and satisfaction constructs in sections 7.5-7.8 and 7.11-7.12 suggest that to a great extent both alienation and satisfaction are influenced by social and structural conditions such as rules, policies, procedures and control mechanisms inherent within the



organisation of work that limit the individual's autonomy and decision-making discretion and that both, therefore may be regarded as interchangeable variables (Sarros *et al*, 2002). The strong association between the two as both dependent and independent variables underscore the many facets of call centre work which restrict CSRs' satisfaction with their work and which engender moderate levels of alienation.

With regard to hypothesis 7, Table 6.58 provides the detail of the regression analysis concerning the independent variable management and technological control on satisfaction, the dependent variable. The table demonstrates that management and technological control explains 46.4 per cent of the variance in satisfaction with a significance value of .000, thereby indicating a moderate association between the two constructs. The discussion of results in relation to control and by reference to hypothesis 7 suggests that control factors impact, largely negatively, upon both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction of call centre workers whose work is characterised as routine, highly monitored and poorly paid and relatively unskilled. The contention that control factors, being significant antecedents of employee satisfaction, influence, both positively and negatively, the extent to which CSRs perceive their occupational and organisational roles is, therefore, largely confirmed by the data (relatively high levels of control as perceived by CSRs and neither high nor low levels of satisfaction). The data confirms that low skilled call centre jobs allied with high levels of technological and management controls do not contribute substantially towards employee well being and satisfaction. These conclusions are confirmed by much of the existing research dealing with customer services (as, for example, Rose and Wright, 2005; Zapf *et al*, 2003; Bain *et al*, 2002; Callaghan and Thompson, 2002; Taylor and Bain, 1999).

The data concerning hypothesis 8 is described in Table 6.59 (Chapter 6) and suggests that involvement makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining satisfaction, while employee control over work operations is the weakest at explaining satisfaction. However,



the significance values of .000 for the seven independent variables subjected to ANOVA indicate that all seven variables make a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of satisfaction. However, as with all associations made between the variables in this research, there is no implication of causality between them.

## **7.14 Contribution to Knowledge**

The research questions are re-stated thus:

1. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?
2. What is the nature of the association between the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?

The results address the research questions and confirm the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the four central concepts within a call centre work context. The results also demonstrate the strong association between these concepts as constructs in relation to the CSRs' experience of work.

This research adds to the growing portfolio of studies of call centre work. The research for this thesis is based on the premise that there are, within the extant literature, three basic analytical approaches taken towards the call centre phenomenon. The first approach deals with the call centre workplace as an emergent empirical phenomenon. The approach is concerned with problems of classification and attempting to identify the essence of what call centres are and whether they are similar or different to other forms of customer service oriented organisational designs (Glucksman, 2004). The identification of management control systems is a major focal point, often based upon labour process theory and other theories of organisational control. A second approach examines the call centre as a novel workplace



encapsulating a unique white collar socio-technical system worthy of study in its own right.

A third approach comprises a range of studies which examine specific social, managerial and behavioural structures and processes either using a call centre workplace as a case study or comparatively analysing a range of different call centres.

The primary contribution to knowledge of this research lies in the consideration, empirical application, consolidation and relevance of the four central concepts of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction as applied to call centre work and the call centre workplace, and to the attitudes and behaviour of CSRs. The concept of control clearly has practical implications for the exercise of control strategies and practices as addressed in Chapter 2.

Control may be regarded as the underpinning and mediating construct which frames CSR attitudes and behaviour towards their work, the customer relationship, local and global management and the technological architecture on which all CSR work operations are based.

As such, the approach taken by this research straddles the three traditional perspectives to call centre research referred to above. The research therefore assumes that the call centre retains its novelty as a customer-oriented workplace with both generic and specific technological and management control systems while at the same time giving credence to the behavioural and attitudinal consequences of such systems upon the CSR. In this context, the research for this thesis considers alienation, commitment and satisfaction as valid analytical concepts and constructs which facilitate greater semantic understanding of the complexities of the call centre work milieu.

While much of the extant literature inevitably deals with some aspects of the call centre work process, the unique contribution of this research to knowledge is to consider the four constructs as interrelated and not mutually exclusive, and this is demonstrated by the nature of the research hypotheses. More importantly, however, is the inclusion of the alienation



construct for the first time in call centre research. It is argued that the resurrection of the alienation concept is long overdue, particularly in relation to the CSR-customer relationship.

## **7.15 Research Limitations**

The research was conducted using a robust and considered research design in order to minimise threats to reliability and validity of the results. In common with all research projects there are certain limitations which are briefly addressed.

### **7.15.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Limitations**

The four main concepts of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction stem from diverse disciplinary traditions within social science. This in itself is not problematic if semantic differences between these concepts are taken into consideration. Another significant aspect relates to levels of analysis. The control literature as reviewed in Chapter 2 has a sociological pedigree and is closely related to the concept of power at societal and organisational levels. Control, therefore, operates and is analysed at two main levels, the level of society itself and the level of organisation. The approach taken in the research for this thesis is to examine organisational control, largely from a sociologically derived perspective and then to consider the structure and process of control within a particular type of workplace. The exclusive focus upon control within the formalised workplace context of the call centre taken by the research is without reference to wider societal control relationships and structures, and as such could pose limitations in terms of generalising the research results. In similar vein, the alienation concept is both sociological and philosophical in nature, and stems from the work of Hegel and appropriated by Marx who embedded the concept within his critique of 19<sup>th</sup> Century capitalism. This research attempts to measure some alienation components in the tradition of Blauner (1964) and Seeman (1959), and hence poses the problem of whether



reducing the alienation concept to measurable components is valid within the context of the wider discussion of alienation as an inherent societal condition, thereby leaving this research open to the charge of methodological reductivism. The commitment and satisfaction concepts are, on the other hand, organisationally grounded and largely prescriptive in nature. The grounding and measurement of both concepts as constructs for this research is therefore largely free from the theoretical conundrums associated with control and alienation particularly should the influence of the so-called work ethic on employee 'prior orientations', typical of much of the American commitment literature reviewed in Chapter 3, be ignored.

### **7.15.2 Limitations of Method and Design**

The selection of the research contexts was partly determined by the willingness or otherwise of senior management within each call centre approached to permit a large-scale survey and a programme of interviews to take place. This factor limited the choice of call centres to four and therefore it cannot be assumed that the results can be generalised to the entire UK call centre range or even to the local area in which the research took place. A further limitation concerns the absence of any differentiation between the roles and functions of each call centre insofar as this may impact upon CSR attitudes. Hence, although it was the intention of the researcher to aggregate the results to the call centre population as a whole, it must be assumed that differences exist between the four call centres and that a comparative analysis of the four call centres should have been attempted. The local labour market was not considered sufficiently in terms of geography and also employment data. Again this was intentional and it would be pertinent to argue that local factors such as these would exert some influence upon potential CSR decisions to work in call centres, upon intentions to quit and upon commitment levels.



The respondent sample is representative only to a certain extent and, because of the nature of the response does not accurately reflect the actual gender and age profile. The problems of non-response were highlighted in Chapter 5 and this poses a limitation common to all research studies of this nature. With regard to the interview programme, CSR interviewees were selected by local management rather than by the researcher. For the researcher, this was a convenience and not time-consuming. Although there was no evidence of selecting 'favoured' CSRs for interview, there may well be some inherent bias in responses due to this factor. With regard to selection of questions for the survey instrument an important omission concerned items dealing with attitudes towards union representation, despite the fact that trade union density was extremely low in all four call centres. A further omission was the absence of any direct questions dealing with individual performance and appraisal. While these items were contained in the original questionnaire for this research, the senior managements in the four call centre organisations did not wish them to be included in the final version for, as one manager put it: 'there are sensitivity reasons' while another manager stated that changes were being made to appraisal systems. A further limitation concerns the absence of any correlation of descriptive statistics with the main constructs from which the hypotheses were derived.

### **7.16 Recommendations for Future Research**

The research has contributed to the extant literature on control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the context of the call centre workplace. With reference to the contribution to knowledge made by this research study and the limitations of the research, the following areas for future research are recommended, which are beyond the scope of this study. Examples rather than an exhaustive list are provided.



### **7.16.1 Construct Linkages and Implications for Practice**

While this research has facilitated a better understanding of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within a call centre workplace, it is argued that the relationship between the main constructs could be explored further. In particular this research has highlighted the nature and complexity of the control construct and its association with satisfaction and alienation. Specifically, the CSR-customer relationship has emerged as one significant underpinning theme and issue, suggesting that further research should include the extent to which emotional labour and emotional dissonance particularly in relation to alienation can be managed as part of the call centre employment relationship.

With regard to commitment further research within the call centre context, as revealed by the research findings, could profitably focus upon the relationship between the management of HRMPs and affective and continuance commitment. In addition, further research would need to take into consideration the tailoring of HRMPs to meet the needs of different CSR and team manager clusters within a number of different call centres which would reflect the HRM and business strategies of the wider organisation as adapted to fit the particular ethos of the call centre workplace and which identify the variety of skills, knowledge and behaviour that are particularly important and distinctive. The alignment between CSR interests and those of the wider organisation is important since higher levels of organisational commitment are could be linked to the reconciliation of employee needs by the type of organisational support provided. This strongly implies that the design of strategic HRM and the policies and practices that stem from it needs to take account of both business strategy and employee interests.

In addition, further research which explores the nature of the relationship between HRMPs and performance within a call centre context is desirable. Further research could also explore



CSR perceptions of HR practices as well as the policies themselves together with the role of the team leader / manager in implementing these policies. This implies the devising of a research design intended to capture the views of CSRs who are on the receiving end of these policies together with team leader / manager views which are critical in order to understand the ways in which these policies actually operate as opposed to the ways in which they are intended to operate.

### **7.16.2 Establish Causal Links**

While this research has contributed to gaps in the extant call centre literature in relation to the four main constructs and the hypotheses generated from them, it is suggested that further research could attempt to establish causal links between the hypothesis variables through the development of multivariate models using structural equation modelling.

### **7.16.3 Comparative Analysis of Call Centre Workplaces**

It was noted in 7.16.2 that it was beyond the scope of this research to undertake a comparative analysis of the four call centres studied. Nevertheless, the research design and data generated by the survey instrument makes such an analysis by the researcher both desirable and feasible.

## **7.17 Some Reflective Observations Concerning this Thesis**

The thesis has addressed the research questions and by means of an examination, review and critique of the relevant extant literature. Ten hypotheses were generated in order to test the strength and direction of the association between the four main constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction. The initial selection of the four concepts was deemed appropriate for the purpose of analysing the reality of the call centre work process in an integrated way.



The selection of the research contexts satisfied the criteria with regard to similarities of work operations and skills across the aggregated population in order to ensure consistency and reliability of the research design, the qualitative and quantitative data generated and the data analysis itself.

Owing to time and research constraints, it was not possible to undertake either a comparative investigation or a case analysis of the four call centres, however desirable this would have been. It was considered that such an analysis which would utilise the entire amount of qualitative data collected during the course of the investigation would result in a further research study supplemental to the research for this thesis. On reflection, therefore, a more systematic analysis of the qualitative data could have been attempted but this was regarded by the researcher as being outside the scope of this thesis.

### **7.18 Summary**

The chapter contains a discussion of the results of this research study by reference to the research questions:

3. What are the nature, relevance and extent of the application of the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?
4. What is the nature of the association between the constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction within the call centre workplace?

The results concerning the four main constructs of control, alienation, commitment and satisfaction were discussed and this was followed by a briefer discussion of the data in relation to the hypotheses. Contribution to knowledge, limitations of the research and recommendations for future research were then provided.



# Appendix 1

## References

Ackroyd, S. (2004): 'methodology for management and organisation studies: Some Implications of critical realism', in Fleetwood, S. and Ackroyd, S. (eds) (2004): *Critical Realist Applications in Organisation and Management Studies*, London, Routledge

Ackroyd, S. And Thompson, P. (1999): *Organisational Misbehaviour*, London, Sage

Adler, P. S. And Borys, B. (1996): Two types of bureaucracy: Enabling and coercive, *Administrative Science Quarterly*. vol 41, pp. 47-63

Adorno, T. W. (ed.) (1976): *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, London, Heinemann

Aldridge, A. and Levine, K. (2001): *Surveying the Social World: Principles and Practice in Survey Work*, Buckingham, Open University Press

Allen, N.J. and Meyer, J.P. (1990): 'The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organisation', *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, vol 63, pp. 1-18

Allen, N.J. and Meyer, J.P. (1996): 'Affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organisation: An examination of construct validity' *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, vol 49, pp. 252-276

Althusser, L. (1970): *Reading 'Capital'*, London, New Left Press

Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T. and Norvie, A. (eds) (1998): *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, London, Routledge

Argyle, M. (1974): *The Social Psychology of Work*, Harmondsworth, Penguin



Ashforth, B. E. and Humphrey, R. H. (1993): 'Emotional labour in service roles: The influence of identity', *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 88-1

Atkinson, C. (2002): 'Career management and the changing psychological contract', *Career Development International*, vol 7, no 1, pp. 14-23

Bain, P. and Taylor, P. (2002): 'Consolidation, 'cowboys' and the developing employment relationship in British, Dutch and US call centres' in Holtgrewe, U., Kerst, C. and Shire, K., *Re-Organising Service Work: Call Centres in Germany and Britain*. Aldershot, Ashgate

Bain, P. and Taylor, P. (2000): 'Entrapped by the electronic panopticon? Worker resistance in the call centre', *New Technology, Work and Employment*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp 2-18

Bain, P., Watson, A., Mulvey, G., Taylor, P., and Gall, G. (2002): 'Taylorism, targets and the pursuit of quantity and quality by call centre management', *New Technology, Work and Employment*, vol 17, no. 3, pp. 170-185

Baldry, C., Bain, P., Taylor, P. (1998): 'Bright satanic offices: intensification, control, and team Taylorism', in Thompson, P. and Warhurst, C. (eds), *Workplaces of the Future*, London, Macmillan

Baldamus, W. (1961): *Efficiency and Effort*. London, Tavistock Publications.

Baruch, Y. and Winkelmann-Gleed, A. (2002), 'Multiple commitments: A conceptual framework and empirical investigation in a community health service trust'. *British Journal of Management*, vol. 13 no. 3, pp. 337-357

Bateman, T.S. and Strasser, S. (1984): 'A longitudinal analysis of the antecedents of organisational commitment', *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 27, pp. 95-112

Batt, R. and Moynihan, L. (2003), 'The viability of alternative call centre production models', in Deery, S. and Kinnie, N. (eds): *Call Centres and Human Resource Management*. Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan

Bauman, Z. (1978): *Hermeneutics and Social Science: Approaches to Understanding*, London, Hutchinson



Beaumont, P. And Harris, R. (2002): 'Examining white-collar downsizing as a cause of change in the psychological contract', *Employee Relations*, vol 24, no 4, pp. 378-388

Belt, V., Richardson, R. and Webster, J. (2002): 'Women, social skill and interactive service work in telephone call centres', *New Technology, Work and Employment*, vol. 17, no.1, pp. 20-34.

Berg, M., Freedman, M. and Freeman, I.(1978): *Management Work Reform: A Limited Engagement*, New York: The Free Press

Berger, P. and Luckman, T. (1967): *The Social Construction of Reality*. London, Allen Lane

Bernstein, R. (1979): *Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell

Bhaskar, R. (1978): *A Realist Theory of Science*, Brighton, Harvester

Bhaskar, R. (1979): *The Possibility of Naturalism*, Brighton, Harvester

Bhaskar, R. (1986): *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, London, Verso

Bhaskar, R. (1991): *Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom*, Oxford, Blackwell

Bhaskar, R. (1993): *Dialectic*, London, Verso

Bibby, A. (2001): *Organising in Call Centres*. [www.eclipse.co.uk](http://www.eclipse.co.uk)

Blackburn, R.M. and Prandy, K. (1965): 'White collar unionisation: a conceptual framework'. *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 49-66.

Blau, P. (1975): *Inequality and Heterogeneity: A Primitive Theory of Social Structure*, New York, Free Press



Blauner, R. (1964): *Alienation and Freedom*. University of Chicago Press

Bolton, S.C. and Houlihan, M. (2005): 'The (mis)representation of customer service', *Work, Employment and Society*, vol 19, no 4, pp. 685-703

Bourdieu, P. (1993): *Sociology in Question*, London, Sage

Bottomore, T. (1988): *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Oxford, Blackwell

Bowen, D. and Ostroff, C. (2004): 'Understanding HRM-firm performance linkages: the role of the "strength" of the HRM system', *Academy of Management Review*, vol 29, pp. 203-221.

Braverman, H. (1974): *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, New York: Monthly Review Press

Brook, P. (2007): 'Customer oriented militants? A critique of the 'customer oriented bureaucracy' theory on front-line service worker collectivism' *Work, Employment & Society* vol 21, no 2, pp. 363-374

Brown, A., Charlwood, A., Forde, C. and Spencer, D. (2007): 'Job quality and the economics of New Labour: a critical appraisal using subjective survey data'. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, vol 31, no 6, pp. 941-971.

Brown, A., Charlwood, A., Forde, C. and Spencer, D. (2008): 'Changes in HRM and job satisfaction, 1998-2004: evidence from the Workplace Employment Relations Survey' *Human Resource Management Journal*, vol 18, no 3, pp. 237-256

Bulmer, M. (1982): *The Use of Social Research: Social Investigation in Public Policy Making*, London, George Allen and Unwin

Burawoy, M. (1979): *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labour Process Under Monopoly Capitalism*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press

Byrne, D. (1998): *Complexity Theory and the Social Sciences: An Introduction*, London, Routledge



- Callaghan, G. and Thompson, P. (2001): 'Edwards revisited: technical control and call centres', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 13-37
- Callaghan, G. and Thompson, P. (2002): ' "We recruit attitude": The selection and shaping of routine call centre labour', *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2, pp. 233- 255
- Child, J. (1984): *Organisation: A Guide to Problems and Practice*. London, Harper and Row
- Chinoy, E. (1955): *Automobile Workers and the American Dream*. Garden City, Doubleday
- Cicourel, A. V. (1981): 'Notes on the integration of micro and macro levels of analysis' in Knorr-Cetina, K. and Cicourel, A. V. (eds), *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Towards an Integration of Micro and Macro Sociologies*, London, Routledge and Keegan Paul
- Clark, A. E. (1996): 'Job satisfaction in Britain', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 189-217
- Clegg, SW. R. (1989): *Frameworks of Power*, London, Sage.
- Cohen, A. (1993): 'Organisational commitment and turnover: a meta-analysis'. *The Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 36 no 5, pp. 1140-1157
- Cohen, A. (1999): 'Relationships among five forms of commitment: An empirical assessment' *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, vol 13, pp. 285-308
- Cohen, A. (2000): 'The relationship between commitment forms and work outcomes: A comparison of three models', *Human Relations*, vol 53 no 3, pp. 387-417
- Cohen, A. (2007): 'Commitment before and after: an evaluation and reconceptualization of organizational commitment', *Human Resource Management Review*, vol 17, pp.336-354.
- Collinson, D. (1988): 'Engineering humour: Masculinity, joking and conflict in shop floor relations', *Organisation Studies*, vol 9, no 2, pp. 181-199



Collinson, D. (2002): 'Managing humour', *Journal of Management Studies*, vol 39, no 3, pp. 269-288

Compte, Auguste (1876): *The Course of Positive Philosophy*, London, George Bell and Sons.

Conway, E. And Monks, K. (2009): 'Unravelling the complexities of high commitment: An employee-level analysis', *Human Resource Management Journal*, vol 19, no 2, pp. 140–158

Cook, J. and Wall, T.D. (1980): 'New work attitude measures of trust, organizational commitment and personal need for non fulfilment', *Journal of Organizational and Occupational Psychology*, vol 53, pp. 39-52

Corson, D. (1991): 'Bhaskar's critical realism and educational knowledge', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp 223-241

Creswell, J.W. (2003): *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Thousand Oaks, Sage

Crompton, R. and Jones, G. (1984): *White Collar Proletariat: Deskilling and Gender in Clerical Work*. London, Macmillan

Cully, M., Woodland, S., O'Reilly, A. and Dix, G. (1999), *Britain at Work*, London, Routledge

Curry, J.P., Wakefield, D.S., Price, J.L. and Mueller, C.W. (1986): 'On the causal ordering of job satisfaction and organisational commitment', *Academy of Management Journal*, vol 29, no 4, pp. 847-858

Deery, S., Iverson, R. and Walsh, J. (2002): 'Work relationships in telephone call centres: understanding emotional exhaustion and employee withdrawal', *Journal of Management Studies*, vol 39, no. 4, pp 471-496

Deery, S., Iverson, R. and Walsh, J. (2004): 'The effect of customer service encounters on job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion', in Deery, S. and Kinnie, N. (2004): *Call Centres and Human Resource Management: A Cross National Perspective*. Houndmills, Palgrave



Deery, S. and Kinnie, N. (2004): *Call Centres and Human Resource Management: A Cross National Perspective*. Houndmills, Palgrave

Delanty, G. (2000): *Social Science: Beyond Constructivism and Realism*, Buckingham, Open University Press

Delbridge, R. 'Working in teams: Ethographic evidence from two 'high-performance' workplaces', in Fleetwood, S. and Ackroyd, S. (eds) (2004): *Critical Realist Applications in Organisation and Management Studies*, London, Routledge

Denscombe, N. (2002): *Ground Rules for Good Research*, Buckingham, Open University Press

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994): 'Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research, in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2000): 'Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage

Dubin, R. (1956): 'Industrial workers' worlds: A study of "central life interests" of industrial workers' , *Social Problems*, vol.III

Durkheim, E. (1953): *Sociology and Philosophy*. Glencoe, The Free Press

Durkheim, E. (1982): *The Rules of Sociological Method*, London, Macmillan.

Eby L. T., Freeman D. M., Rush M. C. and Lance C. E. (1999): 'Motivational bases of affective organizational commitment: a partial test of an integrative theoretical model', *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, vol 72, no 4, pp. 463-483

Edwards, P. (1986): *Conflict at Work*, Oxford, Blackwell



Edwards, R. (1979): *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*. London, Heinemann

Elangovan, A.R. (2000): 'causal ordering of stress, satisfaction and commitment, and intention to quit: A structural equations analysis', *leadership and Organisation Development Journal*, vol22, no 4, pp. 159-165

Eldridge, J. E. T. (1971): *Sociology and Industrial Life*, London, Michael Joseph

Erikson, R. J. and Wharton, A. S. (1997): 'Inauthenticity and depression: Assessing the consequences of interactive service work', *Work and Occupations*, vol. 24, pp. 188-213

Etzioni, A. (1961): *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organisations*. New York, Free Press

Feinberg, R., Kim, I., Hokama, L., de Ruyter, K. and Keen, C. (2000): 'Operational determinants of caller satisfaction in the call centre', *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 123-134

Fernie, S. and Metcalf, D. (1998): *Not Hanging on the Telephone: Payment Systems in the New Sweatshops*, Centre for Economic Performance, LSE.

Feyerabend, P. (1978): *Science in a Free Society*, London, New Left Books

Finegan, J.E. (2000): 'The impact of person and organizational values on organizational commitment', *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, vol 73, no 22, pp.149-169,

Fleetwood, S. and Ackroyd, S. (eds) (2004): *Critical Realist Applications in Organisation and Management Studies*, London, Routledge

Flick, U. (2002): *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, London, Sage



Freeman, R. B. (1978) : Job Satisfaction as an Economic Variable , *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 68, No. 2, Papers and Proceedings of the Ninetieth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association , pp. 135-141

Frenkel, S., Tam, M., Korczynski, M. and Shire, K. (1998): 'Beyond bureaucracy? Work organisation in call centres'. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 9, no. 6, pp. 958-979

Frenkel, S., Korczynski, M, Shire, K. and Tam, M. (1999): *On the Front Line: Organisation of Work in the Information Economy*. Ithaca, ILR

Freund, A. and Carmeli, A. (2003), 'An empirical assessment: reconstructed model for five universal forms of work commitment'. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol 18 No 7, pp. 708-725

Freund, J. (1968); *The Sociology of Max Weber*, London, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press

Gaillie, D., White, M., Cheng, Y. and Tomlinson, M. (1998): *Restructuring the Employment Relationship*. Oxford, Clarendon Press

Gaillie, D., Felstead, A. And Green, F. (2001): 'Employer policies and organisational commitment in Britain 1992-1997', *Journal of Management Studies*, vol 38, no 8, pp. 1081-1097

Garson, B. (1988): *The Electronic Sweatshop: How Computers are Transforming the Office of the Future into the Factory of the Past*. New York, Simon and Schuster.

Gephart, R. (2004); 'Qualitative research and the Academy of Management Journal', *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp 454-462

Giddens, A. (1982): *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory*, London, Macmillan

Giddens, A. (1984): *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Cambridge, Polity Press

Giddens, A. (1990): *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford, Cambridge, Polity Press



Giner, S. (1972): *Sociology*, London, Martin Robertson

Glen, E.N. and Feldberg, R.L., (1979): 'Proletarianising clerical work: technology and organisational control in the office' in Zimbalist, A. (ed), *Case Studies in the Labour Process*. New York, Monthly Review Press

Glisson, C. And Durick, M. (1988): 'Predictors of job satisfaction and organisational commitment in human services organisations', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol 33, pp. 61-81

Glucksman, M.A. (2004): 'Call configurations: Varieties of call centre and divisions of labour', *Work, Employment and Society*, vol 18, no 4, pp. 795-811

Goldthorpe, J., Lockwood, D., Bechofer, F. and Platt, J. (1968): *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Goffman, E., (1959): *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York, Doubleday Anchor

Goldthorpe, J. H., Lockwood, D., Bechhoffer, F. and Platt, J. (1968): *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Grandey, A. A. (2000): 'Emotion regulation in the workplace. A new way to conceptualise emotional labour', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol. 5, pp. 95-110.

Green, F. (2001): 'It's been a Hard Day's Night: The concentration and intensification of work in late twentieth-century Britain', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol 39, no 1, pp 53-80

Green, F. (2006): *Demanding Work. The Paradox of Job Quality in the Affluent Society*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press.

Griffin, R.W. & Bateman, T.S. (1986): 'Job satisfaction and organizational commitment', *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1986, 157-188.



Grint, K. (1991): *The Sociology of Work*. Cambridge, Polity Press

Grugilis, I., Willmott, H. and Knights, D. (2001): *The Labour Process Debate: International Studies of Management and Organisation*, 30.

Guest, D. (1997): 'Human resource management and performance: A review and research agenda' *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol 8, no 3, pp. 263-276

Guest, D. And Conway, N. (1999): 'Peering into the Black Hole: The downside of the New Employment Relations in the UK', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol 37, no 3, pp 367-389

Habermas, J. (1976): *Legitimation Crisis*, London, Heinemann

Habermas, J. (1978): *Knowledge and Human Interests*, London, Heinemann

Habermas, J. (1988): *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*, Cambridge, Polity Press

Hackett, R.D., Bycio, P. and Hausdorf, P.A. (1994): 'Further assessments of Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organisational commitment', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol 79, pp. 15-23

Hackman, J.R. and Lawler, E.E. (1971): 'Employee reactions to job characteristics', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol 55, pp. 259-286

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976): 'Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. ' *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance* ', vol 16, pp. 250-279

Hackman, J. R. and Oldham, G. R. (1980): *Work Redesign*, Addison-Wesley, Reading MA

Hair, J.F., Anderson, P.E., Tatham, R.L., Black, W.C. (1998): *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 5th Edition, New Jersey, Prentice Hall.

Hair, J.F., Anderson, P.E., Tatham, R.L., Black, W.C. (2006): *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 5th Edition, New Jersey, Prentice Hall.



Hamermesh, D. S.(2001): The Changing Distribution of Job Satisfaction, *The Journal of Human Resources*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 1-30

Hannah, D. and Iverson, R. (2004): 'Employment relationships in context: implications for policy and practice', in Coyle-Shapiro, J., Shore, L., Taylor, S. and Tetrick, L. (eds). *The Employment Relationship: Examining Psychological and Contextual Perspectives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Hempel, C. (1965): *Aspects of Scientific Explanation*, New York, The Free Press.

Herzberg, F. (1968): *Work and the Nature of Man*. St. Albans, Staples Press

Hill, S. (1981): *Competition and Control at Work*. London, Heinemann

Hislop, D. (2003), 'Linking human resource management and knowledge management via commitment' *Employee Relations*, Vol 25 No 2, pp.182-202

Hobbes, T. (1651/1962): *Leviathan*, (ed), Piamentaz, J., London, Fontana.

Hochschild, A. R. (1983): *The Managed Heart: The Commercialisation of Human Feeling*, Berkeley, University of California Press

Holtgrewe, U. and Kerst, C. 'Researching call centres: gathering results and theories', Paper presented to the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Labour process Conference, University of Strathclyde, April 2001.

Holman, D. (2001): 'Employee well being in call centres': Paper presented to Conference: 'Call Centres and Beyond: the Human Resource Management Implications', Kings College, London, November 6<sup>th</sup> 2001

Holman, D. (2003): 'Call centres' in Holman, D., Wall, T., Clegg, C., Sparrow, P. and Howard, A., (eds): *The New Workplace: A Guide to the Human Impact of Modern Working Practices*, Chichester, Wiley



Holman, D. and Fernie, S. (2000): 'Can I help you? Call centres and job satisfaction'. *Centrepiece*, vol. 5, no. 1. <http://www.centrepiece-magazine.com>

Horkheimer, M. (1972): *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, New York, Herder and Herder

Horton, J. (1964): 'The dehumanisation of anomie and alienation: A problem in the ideology of sociology', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol 15, no 4, pp. 283-300

Houlihan, M. 'Control and commitment in the call centre? More evidence from the field'. Paper presented to conference: 'Call Centres and Beyond: the Human Resource Implications' Kings College , London, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Houlihan, M. (2002): 'Tensions and variations in call centre management strategies', *Human Resource Management Journal*, vol. 12, no, 4, pp 67-85

Houlihan, M. (2004), 'Tensions and variations in call centre management strategies', in Deery, S. and Kinnie, N. (eds): *Call Centres and Human Resource Management*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan

House, E. R. (1991): 'Realism in research', *Educational Researcher*, vol. 20, pp 2-9

Hutchinson, S., Purcell, J. and Kinnie, N. (2000), 'Evolving high commitment management and the experience of the RAC call centre', *Human Resource Management Journal*, vol 10 no 1, pp. 63-78

Hyman, J., Baldry, C., Scholarios, D., and Bunzel, Dirk (2003): 'Work-life imbalance in call centres and software development', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol 41, no, 2, pp. 215-239

Iaffaldano M.T. and Muchinsky P.M. (1985): 'Job satisfaction and job performance: A metaanalysis', *Psychological Bulletin*, vol 97, pp.251-273.

Incomes Data Services (2002): *Pay and Conditions in Call Centres*, 2002. London, IDS,



Incomes Data Services (2003): *Pay and Conditions in Call Centres*, 2003. London, IDS

Incomes Data Services (2004): *Pay and Conditions in Call Centres*, 2004. London, IDS

Incomes Data Services (2008): *Pay and Conditions in Call Centres*, 2008. London, IDS

Kacmar, M.K., Carlson, D. and Brymer, R.A. (1999) 'Antecedents and consequences of organisational commitment: a comparison of two scales', *Education and Psychological Measurement*, vol 59, no 6, pp. 976-994

Keat, J. (1981): *The Politics of Social Theory: Habermas, Freud and the Critique of Positivism*, Oxford, Blackwell

Kersley, B., Alpin, C., Forth, J., Dix, G., Oxenbridge, S., Bryson, A. And Bewley, H. (2006): *Inside the Workplace: Findings from the 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey*, London, Routledge

Kinnie, N. J., Purcell, J. and Hutchinson, S. (2000): 'Fun and surveillance: the paradox of high commitment management in call centres', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 11, no. 5, pp. 967-985

Kinnie, N. J. and Parsons, J. (2004): 'Managing client, employee and customer relations: Constrained strategic choice in the management of human resources in a commercial call centre', in Deery, S. and Kinnie, N. (eds); *Call Centres and Human Resource Management*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan

Kinnie, N., Hutchinson, S., Purcell, J., Rayton, B. and Swart, J. (2005): 'Satisfaction with HR practices and commitment to the organisation: why one size does not fit all', *Human Resource Management Journal*, vol 15, no 4, pp. 9-29.

Knights, D. and McCabe, D. (1998): 'What happens when the phone goes wild? Staff stress and spaces for escape in a BPR telephone banking call regime. *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp163-194

Korczynski. M. (2001): 'The contradictions of service work: call centre as customer-oriented bureaucracy' In Sturdy, A. Grugilis, I. And Willmott, H. (eds), *Customer Service: Empowerment and Entrapment*, Basingstoke, Palgrave



Korczynski, M. (2002): 'Call centre consumption and the enchanting myth of Consumer sovereignty', in Holtgrewe, U., Kerst, C. and Shire, K., *Re-Organising Service Work: Call Centres in Germany and Britain*. Aldershot, Ashgate

Korczynski, M. (2004) 'Back-Office Service Work: Bureaucracy challenged?', *Work, Employment and Society*, vol 18, no 1, pp. 97-114.

Korczynski, M. (2005): 'Service Work and Skills: An Overview', *Human Resource Management Journal*, vol 15, no 2, pp.1-12

Korczynski, M., Shire, K., Frenkel, S. And Tam, M. (2000): 'Service work in consumer capitalism: Customers, control and organisations', *Work, Employment and Society*, vol 14, no 2, pp. 669-687

Korczynski, M. and Ott, U. (2004): 'When production and consumption meet: Cultural contradictions and the enchanting myth of customer sovereignty' *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 575-599.

Kuhn, T. (1970): *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press

Kuhn, T. (1972): 'Scientific paradigms' in Barnes, B. (ed): *Sociology of Science: Selected Readings*, Harmondsworth, Penguin

Lakatos, I. And Musgrave, A. (eds) (1970): *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Lakatos, I. (1978): *The Methodology of Scientific Research*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Larrain, J. (1983): *Marxism and Ideology*, London, The Macmillan Press

Lee, D. and Newby, H. (1983): *The Problem of Sociology*, London, Hutchinson



Legge, K. (1995, 2005): *Human Resource Management: Rhetorics and Realities*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan

Leidner, R. (1993): *Fast Food, Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinization of Everyday Life*. Berkeley, University of California Press

Lewig, K. A. and Dollard, M. F. (2003): 'Emotional dissonance, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction', *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 366-392

Levi-Strauss, C. (1969): *The Raw and the Cooked*, New York, Harper and Row

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985): *Naturalistic Inquiry*, London, Sage

Locke, E. A. (1976): 'The nature and causes of job satisfaction', in Dunnette, M. D. *Handbook of Industrial and Organisational Psychology*. Chicago, Rand-McNally

Lockwood, D. (1966): 'Sources of variation in working class images of society', *Sociological Review*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 249-63

Lockwood, D. (1958): *The Black-coated Worker*, London, Allen and Unwin

Macdonald, C. L., Sirianni, C. (eds), (1996): *Working in the Service Economy*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press

Manicas, P. T. (1987): *A History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Oxford, Blackwell

Marcuse, H. (1977): *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, London, Routledge and Keegan Paul

Marx, K. (1970): *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, London, Lawrence and Wishart



Marx, K. (1970): *The German Ideology*. London, Lawrence and Wishart.

Marx, K. (1975): *Early Writings*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Marx, K. (1976): *Capital, Volume 1*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd

Mathieu, J. E. and Zajac, J. M. (1990), 'A review and meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates and consequences of organisational commitment'. *Psychological Bulletin*, vol 108 no 2, pp.171-194

May, T. (2001): *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*, Buckingham, Open University Press

Meyer, J.P. and Allen, N.J. (1991): 'A three component conceptualisation of organisational commitment', *Human Resource Management Review*, vol 1, pp. 61-89

Meyer, J.P., Allen, N.J. and Smith, C.A. (1993): 'Commitment to organisations and occupations: Extension and test of a three-component conceptualisation', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol 75, pp710-720

Meyer, J.P. and Allen, N.J. (1997), *Commitment in the Workplace: Theory, Research and Application*, London, Sage.

Millward, N., Bryson, A. and Forth, J. (2000): *All Change at Work?* London, Routledge

Mills, C. W. (1970): *The Sociological Imagination*, Harmondsworth, Penguin

Mills, C. W. (1956): *White Collar*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

Millward, N., Forth, J., Alex Byson, (2000): *All Change at Work? British Employee Relations 1980-98, Portrayed by the Workplace Industrial Relations Survey Series*, Oxford, Routledge



Morrow, P. C. (1983), 'Concept redundancy in organisational research: The case of work commitment' *Academy of Management Review*, vol 7, pp. 139-145

Morrow, P.C. and McElroy, J.C. (1986), 'On assessing measures of work commitment'. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, vol 7, no 2, pp.139-145

Morrow, P.C. and McElroy, J.C. (1993), 'Introduction, understanding and managing loyalty in a multi-commitment world'. *Journal of Business Research*, vol 26, no 1, pp. 1-2

Mottaz, C.J. (1981): 'Some determinants of work alienation', *Sociological Quarterly*, vol 22, no 4, pp. 515-529

Mowday, R.T., Steers, R. And Porter, L.W. (1979): 'The measurement of organisational commitment', *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, vol 14, pp. 224-247

Mowday, R.T., Porter, L.W. and Steers, R. (1982): *Organisational Linkages: The Psychology of Commitment, Absenteeism and Turnover*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press

Mulholland, K. (2002): 'Gender, emotional labour and teamworking in a call centre', *Personnel Review*, vol 31, pp. 283-303

Mumford, E. (1972): '*Job Satisfaction*', London, Longman

Mumford, E. (1991): 'Job satisfaction: A method of analysis', *Personnel Review*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp 2-16

Myers, C.S. (1926): *Industrial Psychology in Great Britain* London, J. Cape Ltd.

Nagel, E. (1961): *The Structure of Science*, London, Routledge and Keegan Paul

Outhwaite, W. (1987): *New Philosophies of social Science: Realism, Hermeneutics and Critical Theory*, London, Macmillan



Paauwe, J. and Richardson, R. (2007): 'Introduction'. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol 8, pp. 257–262.

Page, C. (2003): *Call Centre Job Satisfaction: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors and the Role of Organisational Culture*, Paper prepared for British Academy of Management Annual Conference, September 15-17, 2003, Leeds Business School, Leeds Metropolitan University.

Papineau, D. (1978): *For Science in the Social Sciences*, London, Macmillan

Penley, N.E. and Gould, S. (1988): Etzioni's model of organisational involvement: A perspective for understanding commitment to organisations. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour* vol. 9, pp. 43-59

Penn, R., Rose, M. and Rubery J. (1994), 'The SCOLI skill findings', in Rose, M. R. Penn, R. and J. Rubery, J., (eds), (1994): *Skill and Occupational Change*, Oxford University Press

Popper, K. R. (1959): *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London, Hutchinson

Popper, K. (1972): *Conjectures and Refutations*, London, Routledge and Keegan Paul

Popper, K. (1976): 'The logic of the social sciences' in Adorno, T. (ed): *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, London, Heinemann

Porpora, D. V. (1998): 'Four concepts of social structure' in Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T. and Norrie, A. (eds): *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, London, Routledge

Porter, L.W., and Lawler, E.E. (1968): *Managerial Attitudes and Performance*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.

Porter, L., Steers, R., Mowday, R. and Boulian, P. (1974): 'Organisational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover amongst psychiatric technicians', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol 59, no 3, pp. 603-609



Pugh, D.S. and Hickson, D.J. (2007): *Writers on Organisations*, London, Sage

Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. (1965): *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, New York, Free Press

Randall, M. D. and Cote, J. A. (1991), 'Interrelationships of work commitment constructs', *Work and Occupation*, vol 18, pp. 194-211

Redman, T. And Snape, E. (2005): 'Unpacking commitment: Multiple loyalties and employee behaviour', *Journal of Management Studies*, vol 42, no 2, pp. 301-328

Reed, M. I. (2001): 'Organisation, trust and control: A realist analysis', *Organisation Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp 201-228

Riccoeur, P. (1976): *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and Surplus of Meaning*, Fort Worth, TX: The Texas Austin University Press

Rieder, K., Matuschek, I. and Anderson, P. (2002): 'Co-production in call centres: the workers' and customers' contribution' in Holtgrewe, U., Kerst, C. and Shire, K., *Re-Organising Service Work: Call Centres in Germany and Britain*. Aldershot, Ashgate

Robson, C. (2002): *Real World Research*, Oxford, Blackwell

Roethlisberger, F.J. and Dickson, W.J. (1939): *Management and the Worker*. Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press

Rose, E. (2002): 'The labour process and union commitment within a banking services call centre', *The Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp: 40-62

Rose, E. and Wright, G. (2005): 'Satisfaction and dimensions of control among call centre customer service representatives' *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol 16, no 1, pp. 139–163

Rose, D. And Sullivan, O. (1996): *Introducing Data Analysis for Social Scientists*, Buckingham, Open University Press



Rose, M. (1994): 'Job satisfaction, job skills and personal skills', in Penn, R., Rose, M. and Rubery, J. (eds): *Skill and Occupational Change*. Oxford, Oxford University Press

Rose, M. (2000): *How Far can I Trust It? The Job satisfaction Data in The WERS Employee Survey*. Working Paper 4, Work Centrality and Careers Project presented at Workplace Employee Relations Survey98 Users One day Conference: Friday March 2000, National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

Rose, M. (2003): 'Good deal, bad deal? Job satisfaction in occupations', *Work, Employment & Society*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp 503-530

Rosenthal, P. (2004): 'Management control as an employee resource: the case of front-line service workers', *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 41 no. 4, pp. 601-622

Ross, E.A. (1910): *Social Control*. New York, Macmillan Publishing Company

Russell, B. (2002): 'Making, re-making, managing and controlling customer service agents: Brownfield and Greenfield call centre sites' *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management*, vol 10, pp. 35-52

Russell, B. (2004): 'Are call centres the same?', *Labour and Industry*, vol 14, pp. 91-109

Russell, B. (2008): 'Call centres: A decade of research', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, vol 10, no 3, pp. 195-219

Sarros, J. C., Tanewski, G. A., Winter R. P., Santora, J. C. and Densten, I. L. (2002): 'Work alienation and organisational leadership', *British Journal of Management*, vol. 13, pp. 285-304

Sartre, J-P (1969): *Being and Nothingness*. London, Methuen

Sayer, A. (2000): *Method in Social Science*, London, Routledge



Schneider, B., White, S. S. and Paul, M. C. (1998): 'Linking service climate and customer perceptions of service quality: Tests of a causal model', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol 83 no 2, pp. 150-163.

Schutz, A. (1973); 'Concept and theory formation in the social sciences' in Natanson, M. (ed) *Alfred Schutz Collected papers 1: The Problem of Social Reality*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff.

Seeman, M. (1959): 'On the meaning of alienation', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 24, pp 783-791

Seeman, M. (1971): 'The urban alienations: Some dubious theses from Marx to Marcuse', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 63, pp. 213-218

Seidman, S. (2004); *Contested Knowledge: Social theory Today*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Sewell, G. (1998): 'The discipline of teams: The control of team-based industrial work through electronic and peer surveillance', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 43, pp. 406-69.

Sewell, G. and Wilkinson, B. (1992): 'Someone to watch over me: Surveillance, discipline and the just-in-time labour process' *Sociology*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 271-89

Shills, E. A. and Finch, H. A. (1949): *Max Weber on the Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press

Shire, K., Holtgrewe, U. and Kerst, C. (2002): 'Re-organising customer service work', in Holtgrewe, U., Kerst, C. and Shire, K. *Re-organising Service Work: Call Centres in Germany and Britain*, Aldershot, Ashgate.

Singh, V. and Vinnicombe, S. (2000): 'What does "commitment" really mean?: Views of UK and Swedish engineering managers', *Personnel Review*. vol 29, no 2, pp 228-254

Smith, C., Knights, D. and Willmott, H. (1991): *White-Collar Work: the Non-Manual Labour Process*, London, Macmillan

Spencer, H. (1971): *Structure, Function and Evolution*, London, Nelson.



Sprigg, C. A., Smith, P. R., & Jackson, P. R. (2003): *Psychosocial risk factors in call centres: An evaluation of work design and well-being*. Sudbury, UK: HSE Books.

Sprigg, C. A., & Jackson, P. R., (2006): 'Call centres as lean service environments: Job-related strain and the mediating role of work design', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol 11, pp. 197-212.

Steers, R.M. (1977): 'Antecedents and outcomes of organisational commitment', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol 22, pp. 46-56

Storey, J. (1995): *Human Resource Management, a Critical Text*. London, Routledge

Storey, J. and Quintas, P. (2001): 'Knowledge management and HRM', in Storey, J. (ed): *Human Resource Management: A Critical Text*, London, Thompson

Sumner, W.G. (1904): *Folkways*. New York, Ginn and Company

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (1998): *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Taylor, F. W. (1911): *Scientific Management*. New York, Harper and Row

Taylor, S. and Tyler, M. (2001): 'Emotional Labour and Sexual Difference in the Airline Industry', *Work, Employment & Society*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 77-95

Taylor, P. and Bain, P. (1999): 'An assembly line in the head: work and employee relations in the call centre' *Industrial Relations Journal*. Vol. 30, no 2, pp: 101-117

Taylor, P., Baldry, C., Bain, P., & Ellis, V. (2003) 'A unique working environment: Health sickness and absence management in UK call centres'. *Work, Employment and Society*, vol.17 no.1, pp. 435-458

Taylor, P. and Bain, P. (2004): 'Humour and subversion in two call centres', in Fleetwood, S. and Ackroyd, S. (eds) (2004): *Critical Realist Applications in Organisation and Management Studies*, London, Routledge



- Taylor, P. and Bain, P. (2007): 'Reflections on the call centre – a reply to Glucksman', *Work, Employment and Society*, vol 21, no 2, pp. 349-362
- Thompson, P. (1989): *The Nature of Work; An Introduction to Debates on the Labour Process*. London, Macmillan
- Thompson, P. and McHugh, D. (2002): *Work Organisations*. Houndmills, Palgrave
- Thompson, P. and Warhurst, C. (1998): *Workplaces of the Future*. Basingstoke, Macmillan
- Trigg, R. (1985): *Understanding Social Science: A Philosophical Introduction to the Social Sciences*, Oxford, Blackwell
- TUC (2001): *It's Your Call*. London, Trade Union Congress
- Tyson, S. (1995): *Human Resource Strategy: Towards a General Theory of HRM*. London, Pitman
- Van den Broek, D. (2004): 'We have the values: Customers, control and corporate ideology in call centre operations', *New Technology, Work and Employment*, vol 19, pp 2-13
- Walker, C. R. and Guest, R. H. (1952): *The Man on the Assembly Line*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press
- Wallace, C.M., Eagleson, G. and Waldersee G.R. (2000): 'The sacrificial HR strategy in call centers', *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, vol 11, no 2, pp. 174-184
- Walton, R. (1985), 'Toward a strategy of eliciting employee commitment based on policies of mutuality', in Walton, Lawrence, *HRM Trends and Challenges*, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA
- Warr, P. B. (1992): 'Age and occupational well-being', *Psychology and Aging*, no 7, pp. 37-45
- Watson, D. H. (1992): 'Power, conflict and control at work', in Allen, J., Brayham, P. and Lewis, P. (eds): *Political and Economic Forms of Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity Press.



Watson, T. J. (2003, 2004): *Sociology, Work and Industry*. London, Routledge

Weber, M. (1949): *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Glencoe, The Free Press

Weber, M. (1958): *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York, Scribner

Weber, M. (1968): *Economy and Society*, Bedminster Press

Williams, L.J. and Hazer, J.T. (1986): 'Antecedents and consequences of satisfaction and commitment in turnover models: A reanalysis using latent variable structural equation methods', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol 71, no 2, pp. 219-231

Williams, L.J. and Anderson, S.E. (1991): 'Job satisfaction and organisational commitment as predictors of organisational citizenship and in-role behaviour', *Journal of Management*, vol 17, pp. 601-617

Wood, S. (1996), 'High commitment management and payment systems'. *Journal of Management Studies*. vol 33, no 1, pp. 53-77

Woodward, J. (1965): *Industrial Organisation: Theory and Practice*. Oxford, Oxford University Press

Wray-Bliss, E. (2001): 'Representing customer service: Telephone and texts', in Sturdy, A., Grugilis, I. And Willmott, H. (eds), *Customer Service: Empowerment and Entrapment*, Basingstoke, Palgrave

Wright, E. O. (1976): 'Class boundaries in advanced capitalist societies' *New Left Review*, no. 98, pp. 23-31

Wrong, D. (1967): 'The oversocialised conception of man in modern society' in Demerath, H.J. and Peterson, R.,(eds): *System Change and Conflict*. New York, Free Press/Macmillan.

Zapf, D. (2002): 'Emotional work and psychological strain: A review of the literature and some conceptual considerations', *Human Resource Management Review*, vol. 12, pp. 237-268



Zapf, D., Isic, A., Bechtoldt, M. and Blau, P. (2003): 'What is typical of call centre jobs? Job characteristics and service interactions in different call centres', *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 311-340

Zetterberg, H. (1966): *On Theory and Verification in Sociology*



## Appendix 2

### Phase 1 Pilot Questionnaire

#### CALL CENTRE QUESTIONNAIRE

##### A. *About your job*

**A1 (a) How many years in total have you been working in this call centre?**

Less than 1 year

1 to less than 2 years

2 to less than 5 years

5 to less than 10 years

10 years or more

**(b) How long have you been working in call centres altogether, including this one?**

**A2 is your job permanent, or is it temporary or for a fixed term?**

Permanent

Temporary

Fixed term

**A3 Are you an agency employee?**

Yes

No

**A4 Is your work mainly concerned with**

Inbound operations



Outbound operations

Both inbound and outbound operations

**A5(a) Do you work shifts?**

Yes

No

**(b) If you have ticked 'Yes', what shift(s) do you normally work?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**A6 What sort of calls do you usually make or receive? (Tick all that apply)**

Customer service

Sales

Marketing

Debt collection

Providing information

Taking orders

Other (please specify)

**A7 How many hours do you usually work each week, including any overtime or extra hours?**

Hours per week \_\_\_\_\_hours

**A8 How many overtime or extra hours do you usually work each week, whether paid or unpaid?**



Hours per week \_\_\_\_\_ hours

**A9 Do you agree, or disagree, with the following statements about your job?  
(Tick one box in each row)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My job requires that I work very hard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I never seem to have enough time to get my job done	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Normally I am very pressurised at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel my job is secure in this workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I worry a lot about my work outside working hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A10 In general, how much influence do you have about the following? (Tick one box in each row)**

	A lot	Some	A little	None	Don't know
The range of tasks you do in your job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The pace at which you work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



How you do your work

**A11 Which of the factors listed below do you think add to the pressure of the job? (Please tick the appropriate box for each row)**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>A great deal</b>	<b>To some extent</b>	<b>Not much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Does not apply</b>
Targets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having calls taped	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repetitiveness of calls made or taken	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not enough time between calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having to keep to a script	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficult customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pressure from a supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too few breaks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breaks too short	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisor pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not enough time to talk to colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monotony of the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Always having to 'put on an act' when on the telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other things you can think of	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A12 How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your job? (Tick one box for each row)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
The amount of influence you have over your job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The amount of pay you receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The sense of achievement you get from your work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The respect you get from your supervisors/team leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A13 What do you like most about your job? (Please place in order of priority)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**A14 What do you dislike most about your job? (Please place in order of priority)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

**B** *About working here*

**B1** **During the past 12 months, have you discussed any of these with your supervisor/team leader/line manager? (Tick all that apply)**

How you are getting on with your job

Your chances of promotion

Your training needs

Your pay

None of these

**B2** **During the last 12 months, how much training have you had, either paid for or organised by your employer? (Tick one box only)**

None

Less than 1 day

1 to less than 2 days

2 to less than 5 days

5 to less than 10 days

10 days or more



**B3 Do you agree, or disagree, with the following statements about working here? (Tick one box in each row)**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I share many of the values of my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managers here are understanding about employees having to meet family responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People working here are encouraged to develop their skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel loyal to my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am proud to tell people who I work for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**B4 How helpful do you find the following in keeping up-to-date about your call centre and organisation generally? (Tick one box in each row)**

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful	Not used here
Notice boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workplace newsletter or magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meetings of managers and employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**B5 How often are you and others working here asked by managers for your views on any of the following? (Tick one box in each row)**

	Frequently	Never	Sometimes	Hardly ever
Future plans for the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staffing issues, including redundancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes to work practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Pay issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and safety at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**B6 How good would you say managers here are at the following? (Tick one box in each row)**

	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very poor
Keeping everyone up to date about proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing everyone with the chance to comment on proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responding to suggestions from employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with work problems you or others may have	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treating employees fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**B7 In general, how would you describe relations between managers and employees within the call centre and wider organisation? (Tick one box only)**

Very good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither good nor poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**C About representation at work**

**C1 Are you a member of a trade union or staff association? (Tick one box only)**



Yes

No, but have been in the past

No, have never been a member

**C3** If your answer to question C2 is 'Yes', how long have you been a trade union member?

\_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months

**C2** Ideally, who do you think would best represent you in dealing with managers here about the following issues? (Tick one box in each row)

	Myself	Trade union	Another employee	Somebody else
Getting increases in my pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I wanted to make a complaint about working here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a manager wanted to discipline me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**C3** How much contact do you have with trade union or other worker representatives about workplace matters? (Tick one box only)

I am frequently in contact with worker representatives

I am occasionally in contact with worker representatives

I am never in contact with worker representatives

I am a worker representative

I do not know any worker representatives

**C4** How would you rate the attitude of managers here towards trade unions? (Tick one box only)

Managers here...

...are in favour of trade unions

...are neutral about trade unions

...are not in favour of trade unions



**C5 Is there a trade union or staff association at this call centre?**

Yes

No

**C6 Do you agree, or disagree, with the following statements about unions or staff associations at this workplace? (Tick one box in each row)**

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree      Don't know

*Unions/staff associations here ...*

...take notice of member's problems and complaints

                                                                                                            

...are taken seriously by management

                                                                                                            

...make a difference to what it is like to work here

                                                                                                            

**C7 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the performance of your union? (Please tick one box in each row)**

Very satisfied      Satisfied      Neutral      Dissatisfied      Very dissatisfied

The availability of workplace representatives (reps)

                                                                                      

Communication by workplace reps

                                                                                      

Availability of regional/national officers

                                                                                      

Communication by regional/national officers

                                                                                      

Union's negotiations over pay and conditions

                                                                                      

Union's effectiveness in taking up disciplinary matters

                                                                                      

Union's effectiveness in taking up grievance claims

                                                                                      

Quality of information given to me by the union



Dealing with health  
and safety issues

Overall level of  
representation of  
members

**C8 If you think the union/staff association has been successful in getting improvements, can you identify what you think are the most successful?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**C9 What areas/issues do you think the union has been least successful in getting improvements?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**C10 Can you think of anything that the union/staff association should do for the membership in your workplace over the next 12 months?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**C11 How did you become a union member in your current workplace? (Please tick all reasons which apply to you)**

I was a member of the same union before I started here

I was a member of another union before I started here

I joined here when asked to by a union representative

I asked a union representative to join

I sent a form to the union's offices



My colleagues encouraged me to join the union

Management encouraged me to join the union

**C12 Please list the most important reasons for being a trade union or staff association member.**

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

***D About yourself***

**D1 Are you male or female?**

Male

Female

**D2 How old are you?**

Less than 20 years

20-24

25-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60 or more

**D3 (a) Have you previously worked in other call centres?**

Yes

No

**(b) If 'Yes', in how many other call centres?**



# Appendix 3

## Phase 1 Pilot Interview Schedule

<b>The Interview Questions: Phase 1</b>	
<b>Nature of question</b>	<b>Related construct</b>
How satisfied are you with your work here?	Satisfaction
Has work any meaning for you?	Satisfaction
Do you have any feelings of loyalty and commitment to your organisation?	Commitment - organisation
What is your view of senior management in the organisation outside of this call centre?	Commitment - organisation
What does being a member of the trade union do for you?	Commitment - union
Do you think that your union representative is doing a good job?	Commitment - union
Do you feel pressured by the management and the technology you work with?	Control dimension
How much control do you have over your own work?	CSR control over work



## Appendix 3

### Phase 1 Pilot Interview Schedule

The Interview Questions: Phase 1	
Nature of question	Related construct
How satisfied are you with your work here?	Satisfaction
Has work any meaning for you?	Satisfaction
Do you have any feelings of loyalty and commitment to your organisation?	Commitment - organisation
What is your view of senior management in the organisation outside of this call centre?	Commitment - organisation
What does being a member of the trade union do for you?	Commitment - union
Do you think that your union representative is doing a good job?	Commitment - union
Do you feel pressured by the management and the technology you work with?	Control dimension
How much control do you have over your own work?	CSR control over work

This is an independent survey. We are independent researchers at Liverpool John Moores University, working with your organisation to understand what it feels like to work here and how to improve it. You will not be identified when we report the results, so please answer the questions fully and honestly.



## **Appendix 4**

### **Phase 2 Pilot Questionnaire**

# **WORKING IN A CONTACT / CALL CENTRE *HOW IS IT FOR YOU?***

**This is an independent survey.**

**We are independent researchers at Liverpool John Moores University, working with your organisation to understand what it feels like to work here and how to improve it.**

**You will not be identified when we report the results, so please answer the questions fully and honestly.**



**Project Team**

Ed Rose

Professor Gillian Wright

Liverpool John Moores University

98 Mount Pleasant

Liverpool L3 5UZ

Tel 0151 231 3599 (direct)



**Liverpool** Business School

**Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries about this survey.**



# WORKING IN A CONTACT / CALL CENTRE

## HOW IS IT FOR YOU?

Please give *your personal view* of each of the comments on the survey by ticking the appropriate box.  
**Your responses are immensely important and very valuable to us, please be assured that your questionnaire responses will be treated with utmost respect and confidentiality at all times.**

### PART A: YOU AND YOUR JOB

<b>What is your job like?</b>	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
My job requires that I work very hard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I never seem to have enough time to get my job done	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a lot of pressure on me to make / take as many calls as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not like my calls being monitored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel my job is secure in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am very satisfied with my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this job to a friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I worry a lot about my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think there is too much control over the way I work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think there is a lot of scope for promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>How satisfied are you?</b>	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
<b>With:</b>					
The amount of influence I have over my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The sense of achievement I get from my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much variety I have in doing my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The extent to which I am left alone to get on with the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The encouragement I get from my supervisor / team manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The amount of pay I receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The appreciation I get from my fellow teamworkers / colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>What do you like about your job?</b>	strongly dislike	dislike	Neutral	like	like strongly
My team members / fellow workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bonuses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fringe benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The management here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The physical conditions (layout of desks etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The customers / clients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



### The pressures of your job

How much do these factors add to your job pressure?	A great deal	To some extent	Not much	Not at all	Does not apply
Targets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having calls taped	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repetitiveness of call made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not enough time between calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having to keep to a script	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficult customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pressure from my team manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too few breaks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breaks too short	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not enough time to talk to colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monotony of the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Always having to 'put on an act' when on the telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other things you can think of:					
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Involvement

How often are you and other workers asked for your views on the following?	Frequently	Never	Sometimes	Hardly ever
Future plans for the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staffing issues, including redundancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes to work practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pay issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and safety at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Consultation

How good are managers and leaders here at the following?	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very poor
Keeping everyone up-to-date about proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responding to suggestions from employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with work problems you or others may have	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treating employees fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>Your skills and training</b>					
	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
My job does not require many skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I need more skills to do my job effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job would benefit from being multi-skilled (having more than one particular skill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I were more skilled I would be more interested in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think the following skills are important for my job:					
Verbal skills concerning the customer relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More knowledge of the type of customer I am dealing with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More knowledge of the product(s) and service(s) I am dealing with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More familiarity with the hardware and software that I am using	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get enough training to do my job well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not get enough training after my initial training period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organisation should spend more time and effort on training its staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training I do get is of a high standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training I get leaves a lot to be desired	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Frequency of training</b>					
	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
During the past 12 months I have received no training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the past 12 months I have received less than 1 days training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the past 12 months I have received 1 – 2 days training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the past 12 months I have received 2 – 5 days training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the past 12 months I have received 5 - 10 days training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the past 12 months I have received 10 days or more of training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the past 6 months I have received up to 10 days or more of training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Comments on your job***



## PART B: Your organisation

### How do you feel about the company you work for?

	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
I am quite proud to be able to tell people that I work for Telewest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know the values of my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I share the values of my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not mind leaving my job even if there is no other job to go to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At the moment, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity, not choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
One of the important reasons I stay with this organisation is that leaving would demand a lot of personal sacrifice; another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The offer of a bit more money with another employer would not seriously make me think of changing my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel loyal to this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would not leave my organisation at the moment because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I owe a great deal to my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I sometimes feel like leaving this employment for good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would end my employment here tomorrow given the opportunity of something different or better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would take almost any job to keep working for this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Management in your organisation

	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
I know who the top managers of my organisation are	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that top management appreciate the concerns of ordinary employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think that top management are too remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not think that top management communicate enough with ordinary employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not think its any of my business to know what top management are doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I care a lot about what top management are doing because it affects ordinary employees like myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Comments on your organisation***



## PART C: Your call centre

### How do you feel about working here?

	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
I think this call / contact centre is a pleasant place to work in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like the people in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I look forward to coming to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would not work anywhere else but in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think call / contact centre work is the only work for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like the arrangement of desks in my call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think this call / contact centre is better than other call / contact centres I have worked in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think this call / contact centre is worse than other call / contact centres I have worked in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not like the arrangement of desks in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not like the equipment with which I work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Managers in your call centre (including CSMs but *excluding* team managers)

	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
I get on well with the managers in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think managers treat employees fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think managers are good at dealing with problems employees may have	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think most managers are remote and don't care about employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think managers respond to suggestions from employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think managers here provide everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think managers keep everyone up-to-date about proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think relations between managers and employees in this call centre are very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think managers encourage employees to develop their skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think managers are understanding about employees having to meet family responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### *Comments on your call centre*



## PART D: Your team

<b>Your team</b>	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
I get on well with members of my team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel loyal to my team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not think the team I work in is very helpful to the its members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think the team makes the job bearable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think the team is more valuable for social activities rather than work activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could get on with my work just as well if I were not a member of a team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think the team makes me work more efficiently and productively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a lot of disagreement about work amongst the team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In my experience teams do not work or perform very well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think the team is only as good as its manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think the team makes my work less stressful and pressurised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get a lot of respect from my team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Your team manager</b>	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
If it were not for my team manager I would have left this call centre by now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My team manager motivates me to do my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not get much respect from my team manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My team manager is concerned about my training needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My team manager encourages me to develop my skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My team manager is concerned about my promotion prospects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am always kept up-to-date by my team manager about matters affecting the call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My team manager is understanding about my having to meet family responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My team manager always gives me a chance to comment on any proposed changes affecting the call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My team manager is always helpful in dealing with problems I or my team members may have	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My team manager always responds to suggestions from employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Comments on your team***



## PART E: Customers

How do you feel about the people you deal with?	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
I feel very loyal towards my customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not think any differently towards my customers no matter how abusive or difficult they are	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would treat customers better if I had more time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think dealing with customers is boring because you always have to say the same thing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I always have to put on an act when speaking to customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could give better service to customers if I had more time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customers are sometimes so difficult, it makes my job unpleasant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This sort of call centre gives customers a very good service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could give better service to customers if I had more regular training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### *Comments on customers*

## PART F: About yourself

	Less than 6 months	less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11+ years
How many years in total have you been working in this call / contact centre?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How long have you been working in call centres altogether, including this one?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you working full time <input type="checkbox"/> part-time <input type="checkbox"/>	Are you: female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/>					
Are you working here: temporarily <input type="checkbox"/> permanently <input type="checkbox"/>	How old are you: 18-22 <input type="checkbox"/> 23-27 <input type="checkbox"/> 28-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 <input type="checkbox"/> over 45 <input type="checkbox"/>					
Have you previously worked in other call centres? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Are you a member of a trade union? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>					
Are you an agency employee? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Are you a member of a staff association? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>					
Do you deal with sales <input type="checkbox"/> service <input type="checkbox"/> technical help <input type="checkbox"/> Sales and service <input type="checkbox"/> general staff <input type="checkbox"/>						
How many days have you been absent from work during the past 12 months? 1-2 days <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 5 days <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 10 days <input type="checkbox"/> Over 10 days <input type="checkbox"/>						

**Please make any comments you feel strongly about regarding any of the issues raised in this questionnaire.**

## WHAT TO DO NOW

Please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal it securely, and, depending upon the collection arrangements in your workplace, put it in the box provided for the purpose of collection by the researchers.

**Thank-you for your patience in answering this questionnaire. Your responses will assist the independent researchers and help to make your centre a better place to work in.**



# Appendix 5

## Phase 2 Pilot Interview Schedule

<b>The Interview Questions: Phase 2</b>	
<b>Nature of question</b>	<b>Related construct</b>
What do you think of your work here?	Satisfaction
Has work any meaning for you?	Satisfaction
What do you think of the customers?	Satisfaction, commitment
Do you have any feelings of loyalty and commitment to your organisation?	Commitment - organisation
What is your view of senior management in the organisation outside of this call centre?	Commitment - organisation
Do you feel pressured by the management and the technology you work with?	Control dimension
How much control do you have over your own work?	CSR control over work



## Appendix 5

## Phase 2 Pilot Interview Schedule

The Interview Questions: Phase 2	
Nature of question	Related construct
What do you think of your work here?	Satisfaction
Has work any meaning for you?	Satisfaction
What do you think of the customers?	Satisfaction, commitment
Do you have any feelings of loyalty and commitment to your organisation?	Commitment - organisation
What is your view of senior management in the organisation outside of this call centre?	Commitment - organisation
Do you feel pressured by the management and the technology you work with?	Control dimension
How much control do you have over your own work?	CSR control over work



## Appendix 6

### Phase 3 Questionnaire

Please give your personal view by ticking the appropriate box. Your responses are immensely important and very valuable to us, please be assured that your questionnaire responses will be treated with utmost respect and confidentiality at all times.

#### PART A: YOU AND YOUR JOB

##### A1: What is your job like?

	Strongly Dislike	Dislike	Neutral	Slightly Dislike	Strongly Dislike
1. My job requires that I work very hard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I never seem to have enough time to get my job done	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The work is very boring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I feel that my job is secure in this call / contact centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I feel my job is secure in this call / contact centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I am very satisfied with my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I would recommend this job to a friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I worry a lot about my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I think there is no scope for promotion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I think there is a lot of scope for promotion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# WORKING IN A CONTACT / CALL CENTRE HOW IS IT FOR YOU?

##### A2: How satisfied are you?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
1. I am satisfied with my pay	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I am satisfied with my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I am satisfied with my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I am satisfied with my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am satisfied with my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I am satisfied with my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I am satisfied with my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I am satisfied with my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I am satisfied with my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I am satisfied with my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



School of Management

##### A3: How much influence do you have?

**You are invited to participate in a survey which is organised jointly by Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) and your organisation. The questionnaire survey will ask you to tell the researchers at LJMU what you think about working here. This information is valuable to us because it will tell us what is good about your work environment and what things need to be improved.**

**The survey is independently funded and we aim to be completely objective in both the conduct of the survey and in analysing the results. The survey and its results are totally confidential and everyone who participates will be completely anonymous. The LJMU researchers will have sole access to the questionnaire responses. All responses will then be analysed by a professional data analysis company associated with LJMU.**

**Please do your best to complete the questionnaire. The more people who complete the questionnaire, the more representative it will be of the opinions of CSRs. The questionnaire will only take around 10 minutes to complete.**

**The research team would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your co-operation.**



## WORKING IN A CONTACT / CALL CENTRE HOW IS IT FOR YOU?

Please give *your personal view* of each of the comments on the survey by ticking the appropriate box.  
Your responses are immensely important and very valuable to us, please be assured that your questionnaire responses will be treated with utmost respect and confidentiality at all times.

### PART A: YOU AND YOUR JOB

<b>A1: What is your job like?</b>	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1. My job requires that I work very hard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I never seem to have enough time to get my job done	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. There is a lot of pressure on me to make / take as many calls as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I do not like my calls being monitored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I feel my job is secure in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I am very satisfied with my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I would recommend this job to a friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I worry a lot about my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I think there is too much control over the way I work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I think there is a lot of scope for promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>A2: How satisfied are you?</b>	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
With:					
1. The amount of influence I have over my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The sense of achievement I get from my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How much variety I have in doing my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The extent to which I am left alone to get on with the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The encouragement I get from my supervisor / team manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The amount of pay I receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The appreciation I get from my fellow teamworkers / colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>A3: How much influence do you have?</b>	A lot	Some	A little	None	Don't know
On:					
1. The range of tasks I do in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The pace at which I work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How I do my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>A4: What do you like about your job?</b>	strongly dislike	dislike	Neutral	like	like strongly
1. My team members / fellow workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. My job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. My pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Bonuses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Fringe benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The management here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The physical conditions (layout of desks etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The customers / clients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**A5: The pressures of your job**

How much do these factors add to your job pressure?

	A great deal	To some extent	Not much	Not at all	Does not apply
1. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Having calls taped	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Repetitiveness of call made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Not enough time between calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Having to keep to a script	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Difficult customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Pressure from my team manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Too few breaks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Breaks too short	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Computer monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Not enough time to talk to colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Monotony of the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Always having to 'put on an act' when on the telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A6: Communication**

How often do you discuss the following with you team manager?

	Annually	Every 6 months	Every 3 months	Every month	Every 2 weeks	Never
1. How you are getting on with your job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Your chances of promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Your training needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Your pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A7: Information**

How helpful are the following in keeping you up-to-date?

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful	Not used here
1. Notice boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Workplace newsletter or magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Meetings of leaders and employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Team briefings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A8: Involvement**

How often are you and other workers asked for you views on the following?

	Frequently	Never	Sometimes	Hardly ever
1. Future plans for the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Staffing issues, including redundancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Changes to work practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Pay issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health and safety at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A9: Consultation**

1. How good are managers and leaders here at the following?

	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very poor
2. Keeping everyone up-to-date about proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Providing everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Responding to suggestions from employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Dealing with work problems you or others may have	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Treating employees fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>A10: Your skills and training</b>		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	My job does not require many skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I need more skills to do my job effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	My job would benefit from being multi-skilled (having more than one particular skill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	If I were more skilled I would be more interested in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I think the following skills are important for my job:					
	Verbal skills concerning the customer relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More knowledge of the type of customer I am dealing with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More knowledge of the product(s) and service(s) I am dealing with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More familiarity with the hardware and software that I am using	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I get enough training to do my job well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I do not get enough training after my initial training period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	My organisation should spend more time and effort on training its staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	The training I do get is of a high standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	The training I get leaves a lot to be desired	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>A11: Frequency of training</b>		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	During the past 12 months I have received no training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	During the past 12 months I have received less than 1 days training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	During the past 12 months I have received 1 – 2 days training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	During the past 12 months I have received 2 – 5 days training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	During the past 12 months I have received 5 - 10 days training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	During the past 12 months I have received 10 days or more of training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	During the past 6 months I have received up to 10 days or more of training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Comments on your job***



## PART B: Your organisation

<b>B1: How do you feel about the company you work for?</b>		strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1.	I am quite proud to be able to tell people that I work for my company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I know the values of my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I share the values of my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I do not mind leaving my job even if there is no other job to go to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	At the moment, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity, not choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	One of the important reasons I stay with this organisation is that leaving would demand a lot of personal sacrifice; another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	The offer of a bit more money with another employer would not seriously make me think of changing my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	I feel loyal to this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	I would not leave my organisation at the moment because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	I owe a great deal to my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	I sometimes feel like leaving this employment for good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	I would end my employment here tomorrow given the opportunity of something different or better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	I would take almost any job to keep working for this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>B2: Management in your organisation</b>		strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1.	I know who the top managers of my organisation are	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I feel that top management appreciate the concerns of ordinary employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I think that top management are too remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I do not think that top management communicate enough with ordinary employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I do not think its any of my business to know what top management are doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I care a lot about what top management are doing because it affects ordinary employees like myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>B3: Managers and employees</b>		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
How would you describe relationships between managers (including team managers) and other call centre workers at your workplace?						
1.	I think relations are very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I think relations are good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I think relations are neither good nor poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I think relations are poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I think relations are very poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Comments on your organisation***



## PART C: Your call centre

### C1: How do you feel about working here?

	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1. I think this call / contact centre is a pleasant place to work in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I like the people in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I look forward to coming to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I would not work anywhere else but in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I think call / contact centre work is the only work for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I like the arrangement of desks in my call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I think this call / contact centre is better than other call / contact centres I have worked in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I think this call / contact centre is worse than other call / contact centres I have worked in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I do not like the arrangement of desks in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I do not like the equipment with which I work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### C2: Managers in your call centre (including CSMs but *excluding* team managers)

	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1. I get on well with the managers in this call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I think managers treat employees fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I think managers are good at dealing with problems employees may have	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I think most managers are remote and don't care about employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I think managers respond to suggestions from employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I think managers here provide everyone with a chance to comment on proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I think managers keep everyone up-to-date about proposed changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I think relations between managers and employees in this call centre are very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I think managers encourage employees to develop their skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I think managers are understanding about employees having to meet family responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### *Comments on your call centre*



## PART D: Your team

<b>D1: Your team</b>		strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1.	I get on well with members of my team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I feel loyal to my team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I do not think the team I work in is very helpful to the its members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I think the team makes the job bearable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I think the team is more valuable for social activities rather than work activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I could get on with my work just as well if I were not a member of a team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I think the team makes me work more efficiently and productively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	There is a lot of disagreement about work amongst the team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	In my experience teams do not work or perform very well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	I think the team is only as good as its manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	I think the team makes my work less stressful and pressurised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	I get a lot of respect from my team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>D2: Your team manager</b>		strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1.	If it were not for my team manager I would have left this call centre by now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	My team manager motivates me to do my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I do not get much respect from my team manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	My team manager is concerned about my training needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	My team manager encourages me to develop my skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	My team manager is concerned about my promotion prospects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I am always kept up-to-date by my team manager about matters affecting the call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	My team manager is understanding about my having to meet family responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	My team manager always gives me a chance to comment on any proposed changes affecting the call / contact centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	My team manager is always helpful in dealing with problems I or my team members may have	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	My team manager always responds to suggestions from employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Comments on your team***



## PART E: Customers

<b>E1: How do you feel about the people you deal with?</b>	strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1. I feel very loyal towards my customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I think customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I do not think any differently towards my customers no matter how abusive or difficult they are	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I would treat customers better if I had more time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I think dealing with customers is boring because you always have to say the same thing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I always have to put on an act when speaking to customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I could give better service to customers if I had more time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Customers are sometimes so difficult, it makes my job unpleasant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. This sort of call centre gives customers a very good service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I could give better service to customers if I had more regular training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### *Comments on customers*

## PART F: About Yourself

	Less than 6 months	less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11+ years
How many years in total have you been working in this call / contact centre?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How long have you been working in call centres altogether, including this one?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you working full time <input type="checkbox"/> part-time <input type="checkbox"/>						
Are you working here: temporarily <input type="checkbox"/> permanently <input type="checkbox"/>						
Have you previously worked in other call centres? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>						
Are you an agency employee? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>						
Do you deal with sales <input type="checkbox"/> service <input type="checkbox"/> technical help <input type="checkbox"/> Sales and service <input type="checkbox"/> general stuff <input type="checkbox"/>						
How many days have you been absent from work during the past 12 months? 1-2 days <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 5 days <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 10 days <input type="checkbox"/> Over 10 days <input type="checkbox"/>						
Are you: female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/>						
How old are you: 18-22 <input type="checkbox"/> 23-27 <input type="checkbox"/> 28-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 <input type="checkbox"/> over 45 <input type="checkbox"/>						
Are you a member of a trade union? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>						
Are you a member of a staff association? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>						

**Please make any comments you feel strongly about regarding any of the issues raised in this questionnaire.**

## WHAT TO DO NOW

Please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal it securely, and, depending upon the collection arrangements in your workplace, put it in the box provided for the purpose of collection by the researchers.

**Thank-you for your patience in answering this questionnaire. Your responses will assist the independent researchers and help to make your centre a better place to work in.**



## Appendix 7

### Phase 3 Interview Schedule

The Interview Questions: Phase 3	
Nature of question	Related construct
How satisfied are you with your work here?	Satisfaction
Has work any meaning for you?	Satisfaction; Alienation
Do you have any feelings of loyalty and commitment to your organisation?	Commitment
How do you view your relationship with customers?	Alienation (estrangement, bad faith)
Do you feel pressured by the management and the technology you work with?	Control dimension
How much control do you have over your own work?	CSR control over work
Does humour and 'having fun' feature in the work that you do?	Alienation, satisfaction
What do you think of your team members and team leader?	Commitment
What is your view of senior management in the organisation outside of this call centre?	Commitment



PAGE/PAGES  
EXCLUDED  
UNDER  
INSTRUCTION  
FROM  
UNIVERSITY