

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE JOB SATISFACTION OF CALL CENTER AGENTS IN NAIROBI PROVINCE.

By

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DECLARATION

This project report is my original work and has not been submitted for any degree in any other university.



Ruth Wanjao

3/09/09

Date

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This project report has been submitted with our approval as University supervisors.



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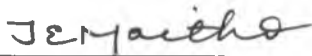
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DEDICATION

This project paper is dedicated to my late father Paul Morgan Wanjao, for his inspiration, words of wisdom and guidance. Also not forgetting my mother for her prayers love and support and for the moral support that I received from my brothers during the study.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to everyone who has contributed their time towards the completion of the project report. It was very challenging working and meeting your targets and researching at the same time.

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I would like to thank all my friends, research participants and colleagues who participated in the study. Your prayers, words of encouragement and support were much appreciated.

Last but not least I would like to thank my heavenly father for giving me the opportunity, the strength and determination to complete this work.

Thank you ALL. I could not have done it alone.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate on the factors influencing job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi Province. The researcher found it important to investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction of call center agents as they determine the success of any call center.

The main objectives of the study was to investigate on how the following factors affect job satisfaction among call center agents in Nairobi province and these were; job design, motivation, quality of supervision, career growth and the perceived status of the job.

The call center industry in Kenya is expected to grow tremendously due to the completion of the Fibre Optic Cable and it's expected to translate to high quality data and internet services at much more affordable rates. Kenya is also making great strides to partake a piece of the cake in Business Process Outsourcing. It's expected that there will be more call centers established in Kenya due to improved telecommunication infrastructure resulting to job creation for call center agents. Most call centers all over the world are faced with issues of Job Satisfaction of call center agents resulting to poor performance by the call center.

In this paper the researcher attempted to analyse all the variables mentioned above and investigate how they influence job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi province.

The data was collected through closed ended questionnaires which were self administered and emailed to the respondents from three selected call centers in Nairobi Province. The data collected was then analysed using both qualitative and quantitative statistical methods.

The findings showed that all the variables mentioned above influenced job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi province. From the findings, the perceived status of call center work was very low by both the call center agents and from other departments within the same organisation. This applied mainly to in-house call centers. It was also observed that there was lack of career growth in the call centers. In addition the levels of motivation remained extremely low. The findings also showed that the quality of supervision was more task focused and the management had to do something about the job design as all these were influencing job satisfaction of the call center agents in the three call centers.

Finally recommendations from the findings were made which will assist call center management to identify ways of enhancing job satisfaction in the call center leading to an improved working environment in the call center.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Over the past few years, the call center has emerged as the essential component of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategy now widespread among companies. Many companies are quickly learning that service is the key to attracting and retaining customers, which leads to increased business and revenue. Consumers on the other hand are expecting more value from the products and services being offered and are quickly adopting the communication channels made possible by advances in telecommunications and the Internet.

Having an excellent call center is an important strategic asset that will not only improve a company's image, but also improve customer relationships. Through the contact center, companies learn more about their clients, and with that knowledge, they learn how to serve them better, leading to an improved bottom line.

The development of call centers in Kenya is a fairly a new industry which is rapidly growing due to the recent completion of the Fibre Optic cable in July 2009 which has led to improved telecommunication infrastructure at affordable prices. In addition many firms in the US and Europe have adopted Business Process Outsourcing which is a form of outsourcing involving contracting the operations and responsibilities of a specific business function or processes to a third party provider. Kenya is making great strides towards becoming an outsourcing¹ giant in Africa and hopes to partake in Business Process Outsourcing. The growth of the call center industry will create more employment opportunities for call center agents who will be working in the call centers.

Many researchers have investigated job satisfaction over the years with a number of theories and views relating to it. Job satisfaction or employee satisfaction can be defined as how content an individual is with his or her job. It's the extent to which people like (Satisfaction) or dislike (Dissatisfaction) their job (Spector (1997)).

The impact of call centre workplace upon employee satisfaction or well-being is beginning to attract the attention of researchers” (Rose & Wright, 2005). Call centres have become an integral part of most organizations today; playing an important role in the service delivery chain. Job satisfaction in Kenyan call centers hasn't been researched on extensively as it's still a fairly new industry. More studies on Job satisfaction of call center agents are necessary because motivated employees provide better customer service than unmotivated employees Levin (2004). Tidmarsh (2003) claim that for call centres to compete successfully, the main corporate goal should be employee satisfaction.

In this study the researcher was concerned with the main factors that influence job satisfaction among call center agents in Nairobi. It also aims to look at how call center agents can remain motivated and deliver high quality service without burn out.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Currently, call centres appear to be the *bête noire* of organisational types. They have been labelled as ‘electronic panopticon’, ‘dark satanic mills of the 21st century’ and ‘human battery farms’ (Fernie and Metcalf, 1998; Garson, 1988; IDS, 1999. Rose and Wright (2005) argue that call centres are generally associated with; low levels of satisfaction due to the fairly low skilled nature of their work which makes it less challenging. Most call centers are generally associated with high stress levels, limited career growth, lack of motivation, the perceived low status of the job by call center agents and customers. The quality of supervision in call centers, the job design and the working hours greatly affect job satisfaction of the call center agents resulting to increased cases of absenteeism and high staff turnover. The study was aimed at identifying the major factors that influence Job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction among call center agents in Nairobi province.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the study were as below;

1.4.1 Broad objectives

The broad objective of the study was to investigate the factors which influence job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi Province.

1.4.2 Specific objective

The important specific objectives that guided the study were;

1. To establish the effect of job design on job satisfaction.
2. To determine the effect of the perceived status of the job on job satisfaction.
3. To determine the influence of the quality of supervision on job satisfaction.
4. To establish the effect of career growth on job satisfaction.
5. To determine the influence of motivation on job satisfaction.

1.5 Research questions

1. What is the effect of job design on job satisfaction?
2. To what extent does the perceived status of the job influence job satisfaction?
3. Does the quality of supervision affect job satisfaction?
4. How does career growth affect job satisfaction?
5. How does motivation influence job satisfaction?

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of the study were aimed at assisting to identify the major factors that influence job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi province. This was aimed at assisting call center agents to realise the factors that affected job satisfaction and through this, call centre management would be able to develop strategies to address these factors resulting to improved job satisfaction in the call center. The results of this study would be used to improve the working conditions in the call center.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

The study will focus on factors affecting job satisfaction of call center agents, this is a major issue that the agents are able to identify with and they will be willing to participate

in a study that addresses their problem. The results of the findings will enable the call center management improve job satisfaction in the call center which will result into improved performance within the call center. Due to time and cost constraints the researcher will not be able to sample the entire population.

1.8 Limitation of the study

Job Satisfaction is a sensitive topic in many call centers and most agents will not be willing to take part in the study, the agents will be assured of full anonymity to avoid fear of victimisation. The call center management may fear disclosing the call centre's weaknesses which can be used negatively by competitors. The management will be assured that the results of the research are purely for academic purposes and full anonymity will be practised in the study and the results will be provide useful insight on how to tackle the problem of job satisfaction in the call center.

1.9 Assumption of the study

For the research to be successful a sample representing the population during the research process will be truly representative and the use of valid data collection instruments will be employed. The main data collection methods will be the use of questionnaires from the sample selected. Honesty and accuracy will be maintained during the whole research process while filling out the questionnaires.

Call center agents will be interested and willing to participate in the research as Job Satisfaction in the call center is a major issue affecting them. Call center management will facilitate this process as they will be interested in finding out ways of improving the call center environment and assess the factors that influence job satisfaction of their call center agents.

1.10 Definition of significant terms

Business process outsourcing is a form of outsourcing involving contracting the operations and responsibilities of a specific business function or processes to a third party provider. The practice is evolving from simply a cost cutting measure to a core strategic activity, aimed at enabling companies to focus on their core business. Outsourcing becomes off shoring when the third-party service provider is located overseas.

Call/Contact center is defined as “a physical or virtual operation within an organization in which a managed group of people spend most of their time doing business by telephone, usually working in a computer-automated environment” (Marr & Neely, 2004, p. 5).

Call center agent refers to the individuals employed to work in a call Center and deal with the customers' concerns and requests telephonically, via email or short message service (SMS).

Inbound call this is a call initiated by a customer to a call center or a contact center. A call center which handles inbound calls exclusively is known as an inbound call center. Inbound call center deal with calls made by the consumer to obtain information, report a problem or requesting for assistance.

In-house call centre refers to a specialized department of a large organization whereas external call centres refers to an independent firm contracting for other companies.

Job design is the organisation of tasks and the structuring of jobs in a way that provides satisfaction for job holders and increases their effectiveness. (Spector 1997)

Job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job; an affective reaction to one's job; and an attitude towards one's job. It's therefore the extent to which people like (Satisfaction) or dislike (Dissatisfaction) their job (Spector 1997).

Out bound call: this is a call in which call center agents make outbound calls to customers on behalf of a business or client. Outbound call center services pertain to activities where the call center agents place calls to potential customers with the intention of selling products or services to the individual

1.11 Summary

The call center industry in Kenya is expected to grow tremendously due to the completion of the Fibre Optic Cable which is anticipated to be completed by July 2009. This will translate to high quality data and internet services at much more affordable rates. Kenya is making strides to partake a piece of the cake in Business Process Outsourcing. It's expected that there will be more call centers established in Kenya due to improved telecommunication infrastructure resulting to job creation for call center agents.

Most call centers all over the world are faced with issues of Job Satisfaction of call center agents resulting to poor performance by the call center. This paper aims to identify the factors influencing job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi province. The main factors identified are job design, the perceived status of the job, the quality of supervision in the call center, career growth and motivation. The researcher will attempt to analyse these variables and see the influence they have on Job Satisfaction.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Call centers have provided an alternative means of doing business by striving to provide fast and efficient services to customers and serves as an integral part in many organisations. The call center industry in Kenya is still a fairly new industry and it's expected to grow tremendously due to the completion of the fibre optic cable in July 2009 and an increasing interest in the county to take part in Business Process Outsourcing. As a result there will be an increasing number of call center agents who will be absorbed into the job market and will be given the responsibility of providing quality customer service. The success of any call center is greatly influenced by the call center agents as they represent the image of the company to the customers.

This paper will look at the factors influencing job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi province and has identified several factors which influence job satisfaction of call center agents in the call center industry. We shall begin this paper by defining what job satisfaction is followed by a general overview of what a call center is and the nature of work in the call center. We shall then look at the factors influencing job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi. The dependent variable in this paper is Job Satisfaction while the independent variables are; job design, motivation, quality of supervision, the perceived status of the job and career growth in the call center. We shall also focus on previous research conducted by other scholars who have been interested in job satisfaction in call centers.

2.2 General overview of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction or employee satisfaction can be defined as how content an individual is with his or her job. It is in regards to ones feelings or state of mind regarding about the nature of their work. It is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job; an affective reaction to one's job; and an attitude towards one's job. It's therefore the extent to which people like (Satisfaction) or dislike (Dissatisfaction) their job (Spector (1997). Spector further argues that high level of job satisfaction contribute to low employee turn over, fewer cases of absenteeism and an outstanding company reputation. This rates the company as a good employer attracting high quality job applicants to fill its positions. We shall look on job satisfaction in details while reviewing the factors influencing job satisfaction of call center agents later on in this chapter.

2.3 Definition of call centers

The Call Centre Association defines a call centre as “a physical or virtual operation within an organization in which a managed group of people spend most of their time doing business by telephone, usually working in a computer-automated environment” (Marr & Neely, 2004). The word ‘call centre’ is sometimes used synonymously with ‘contact centre’ and ‘helpdesk’.

Taylor and Bain (1999) cited in Dean (2002) define call centres in terms of three components. Firstly, the call centre is a dedicated operation where the central focus of call centre representatives, is on customer service. Secondly, these representatives make use of the telephones and computers simultaneously. And thirdly, “the calls are processed and controlled by an automatic distribution system” (Dean, 2002).

Kleemann and Matuschek (2002) mention that call centres can either be in-house call centres or external call centres. In-house call centres refers to a specialized department of a large organization whereas external call centres refers to an independent firm contracting for other companies. Kleemann and Matuschek (2002) suggest that working conditions in in-house call centres are notably better than that in external call centres. While the core focus of in-house call centres is to improve customer service for their products, external call centres focus more on providing uncomplicated services at affordable rates to a large clientele (Kleemann & Matuschek, 2002). Generally the tasks in in-house call centres are more complex than those in external call centres. Irrespective of whether call centres are in-house or external, more and more companies are accepting the idea.

2.4 The role of call centers

Call centres are said to be the most rapidly growing form of employment in Europe today (Paul and Huws, (2002). The number of call centres in France and Germany has more than doubled since 1997. It is now estimated that around two workers in every 100 in the United Kingdom have jobs in call centres. In the USA they employ about 3 per cent of the workforce while in Europe the figure is just over 1 per cent. (Income Data Services, 2001; Human Resource Journal 2002). These developments reflect a more general shift in economic activity from goods production to service provision. Call centres epitomize many of the characteristics of service work that have come to dominate developed economies. Like most customer service organizations they provide an intangible, perishable product, which is highly variable and engages the customer in its production (Korczyński, 2002).

Call centres require their employees to be skilled at interacting directly with customers while simultaneously working with sophisticated computer-based systems which dictate both the pace of their work and monitor its quality. The servicing of customers through telephone call centres

has delivered substantial financial benefits to organizations. Call centres engage staff to work interactively with customers on either inbound or outbound calls on activities as diverse as sales and telemarketing, product and service information and customer queries and bookings.

Modern telephony and computer-automated equipment has radically altered the transportability of services (Miozzo and Ramirez, 2003). By switching customer contact from locations that were proximate to the customer to locations that consolidated service providers, organizations have been able to reduce the need for costly high street outlets and expensive branch networks. Moreover, the centralization of service provision has enabled firms to rationalize the work process through the extensive use of information and communication technologies thereby maximizing the use of service workers' time.

The standardization of service encounters with customers and the use of functionally equivalent and interchangeable service providers have also helped call centres to achieve great speed and efficiency in the delivery of their services Gutek (1995). This, however, can carry costs for organizations. An emphasis on service throughput to the detriment of service quality can erode customer loyalty and damage an organization's reputation for competence in service delivery. This is particularly the case where organizations have made the call centre their principal source of interaction with the customer.

The competing pressures of high productivity and customer service have often proved difficult to reconcile (Korczynski, 2002; Mulholland, 2002; Taylor et al., 2002). Nor has the related issue of managing the labour process been an easy task to execute. Tight control can deliver efficient task completion but it is unlikely to elicit high-quality performance from employees. Control workers too completely, as Fuller and Smith (1996) observe and management will 'extinguish exactly those sparks of worker self-direction and spontaneity' that are so critical for service quality.

2.5 The nature of work in a call center

The call centre industry has attracted much negative comment in the media. Newspaper, radio and television features have all referred to call centres as 'electronic sweatshops', with the term 'battery hens' used to illustrate the suggested intensive and stressful nature of being a call center agent. Such terminology has partly emerged from research papers by Garson (1988), Fernie & Metcalf (1998), and Taylor & Bain (1999). Call centre jobs are considered to be 'low-quality' and heavily routinised forms of work. Batt & Moynihan (2002) state that 'Production line call centres proliferate', whilst many manufacturing enterprises have moved away from this 'mass production model' (maximise volume and minimise costs) and have adopted more high

involvement work practices e.g., Huselid, (1995). All this is somewhat removed from the 'knowledge workers' predicted for this, the new millennium.

The jobs have been characterized as 'dead-end' with low status, poor pay and few career prospects. Moreover, the research has shown that much of the work is closely monitored, tightly controlled and highly routinized. Computer technology plays a critical part in this process; work can automatically be allocated to telephone operators to minimize waiting time, the speed of work and level of downtime can continuously be measured and the quality of the interaction between the service provider and the customer can be assessed remotely and at management's discretion. This 'information panopticon' is said to continuously remind workers that 'although no manager may be physically present, every aspect of their performance may be constantly measured' Macdonald and Sirianni (1996).

It has been suggested that this form of service delivery bears the hallmarks of an engineering model (Herzenberg, Alice and Wial, 1998). Tasks have been simplified, services must conform to redetermined design specifications and the production process has been constructed to minimize labour costs. Indeed, one writer raised the prospect that 'a combination of twentieth-century technology and nineteenth-century scientific management is turning the office of the future into the factory of the past' (Garson, 1988).

Other studies, however, present quite a different image of call centre work. Frenkel et al. (1998), for example, point to a greater diversity in call centre work revealing environments where jobs provide challenge and interest and where the skills of front-line workers are acknowledged and valued. They suggest that there are clear limitations to the engineering model and to the standardization of work procedures. Indeed there are a number of factors that may act to constrain the use of the Taylorized engineering model. First, where service work requires subjective interpretation and where employees must exercise judgement to meet customer needs it is clearly inappropriate to adopt methods of simple control to manage employees (Leidner, 1996). This type of work typically requires discretion. In these circumstances it is said that employees should be armed with information rather than instructions (Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996). Second, service work cannot be disembodied from the supplier.

Customers care how services are delivered. The way in which employees display their feelings towards customers can have an important effect on the perceived quality of the interaction (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). Thus the attitudes of the employee are critical to the quality of the interaction, and tightly scripted dialogue and routinized responses can impair the service that

is provided to the customer. Third, the involvement of the customer as a third party brings a greater degree of complexity and uncertainty to the labour process. Although management may wish to standardize the behaviour of customers and limit their options it is not always possible to achieve predictability and compliance in the service exchange. Where customers' requirements cannot easily be standardized workers will require some degree of flexibility and discretion in negotiating their interactions with customers.

Korczyński (2002) has argued that call centre work is infused with two logics: a need to be cost-efficient and a desire to be customer-orientated. He suggests that these twin objectives are fundamentally contradictory. On the one hand organizations seek to reduce costs per customer transaction by increasing the speed with which calls are processed, yet on the other hand they extol the virtues of customer service and encourage their employees to be quality-orientated. Mulholland (2002) refers to this as an attempt to combine a lean production model with a soft discourse of caring and quality. Her research, however, fails to find a genuine and sustained commitment to this language of quality. In contrast, Shire, Holtgrewe and Kerst (2002) believe that the need to be customer-orientated does impose real limits on the degree of service standardization. The tensions and contradictions of these two logics are clearly evident in the marketplace. Customers are seeking to obtain services that are adapted to their needs and requirements yet at the same time are inexpensive and can be supplied efficiently. Firms are attempting to personalize their service, perhaps as part of a customer relationship management programme, while at the same time seeking to reduce the cost per transaction.

Tidmarsh (2003) suggest that call centers are known to display high levels of technology utilisation while being subject to demands for high levels of productivity, customer service, high levels of stress and turnover which greatly affects job satisfaction of the agents. These features result in call centers being extremely challenging environments to manage (Tidmarsh, 2003). In managing call centers organisations strive to satisfy both budgetary and service priorities, which often result in conflicting situations between hard and soft goals as well as intangible and tangible outcomes (Dean 2002). The type of work organization and employment practices that are adopted will be affected by the way in which these competing demands are balanced or reconciled Hutchinson, Purcell and Kinnie (2000).

The strong focus in call center environments on efficiency and control results in a lack of focus on customer orientation and service priorities, which contributes to the difficulty frontline staff have in being customer oriented (Knight & McCabe. 1998; Taylor & Bain, 1999; Wallace et al, 2000).

It has been observed that call centre workers are not only expected to execute their physical tasks competently and efficiently and to display knowledge of their organization's products, procedures or practices but also they are held accountable for their emotions (Hochschild, 1983). Rather than exerting physical labour to manufacture a product the service labour process involves the use of emotional labour to manufacture relationships (Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996). Employees are expected to display emotions that help create a desired 'state of mind' in the customer. In order to achieve this result call centres have increasingly sought to specify and control the way in which employees presented themselves to customers. The call center agents are faced with emotional exhaustion as they have to fake their emotions which greatly affect job satisfaction.

In many service exchanges 'workers' moods, facial expressions and words are subject to supervision' (Leidner, 1996, p. 30). Employees are frequently supplied with tightly scripted dialogue and are required to follow highly detailed instructions when interacting with customers. The use of scripts has been described by Taylor and Bain (1999, p. 109) as an attempt to structure the 'speech of workers into a series of predictable, regulated and routinized queries and responses'. In their interaction with customers, employees are often forced to express emotions they do not feel (such as being friendly or happy) or suppress emotions that they genuinely do feel (such as anger or frustration). This can lead to feelings of inauthenticity and emotional dissonance and result in anxiety and burnout. In addition call center agents are faced with challenges such as a limited time to address the customer's query while effectively controlling the call and adjusting the tone of their voice accordingly while displaying friendly and happy emotions.

Moreover as Ashforth and Humphrey (1993, p. 96) point out: customer perceptions of good service hinge on more than mechanical conformity with display rules. They hinge on the extent to which the service agent conveys a sense of genuine interpersonal sensitivity and concern. The establishment of this emotional rapport or resonance cannot simply be mandated by the organization. Sustained contact with customers with few opportunities either to vary the pace of work or the nature of the tasks can also result in greater stress and burnout (Morris and Feldman, 1996).

Issues relating to working time arrangements and work-life balance also affect the well-being of call centre workers. Many service providers, as Paul and Hews (2002) note, are under pressure to maximize availability and operate into the night or round the clock to meet demand or respond to customers in different time zones. This can affect both the work and personal lives of employees.

In the UK call centres are said to have some of the longest opening hours in Europe (Call Centres, 2002). Indeed, a survey found that almost a third of all call centres operated 24 hours a day. Of those, more than three-quarters were open 365 days a year. Surprisingly, few offered staff flexibility to balance their working and caring responsibilities. Only a third of organizations offered staff some choice over shift arrangements; a quarter offered flexitime and 20 per cent provided some choice over starting and finishing times. Paradoxically, the survey disclosed that the organizations recognized that improvements in work–life balance would improve staff retention, minimize absenteeism and reduce stress therefore resulting in increased job satisfaction (Call Centres, 2002).

Service sector organizations have also increased the pressure and caused great dissatisfaction on the call center agents by raising the expectations of customers about the service they can expect to receive (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). Many openly compete on the rhetoric of service quality. A study conducted by Reed Employment Services of more than 500 organizations in the United Kingdom found that almost two-thirds of the respondents claimed that phone rage – people losing their temper over the telephone – had increased in the past five years (The Guardian, 1997). The survey attributed the trend in part to the belief by customers that their problems would be resolved speedily over the telephone. The study found that the primary reason for phone rage was an apparent ‘insincere tone of voice from the person handling the query Taylor (1998, p. 87) has suggested that customers are now more able to discern the difference between genuine ‘quality service’ and ‘feigned quality service’. Of course, where employees are required to express emotions that they do not feel or where they attempt to change their mood to match the organization’s rules they may sound ‘insincere’ to the customer.

In spite of the growth rate in UK call centers, which employ almost 800,000 agents, call centers in the UK are regarded as modern-day satanic mills (call centers are modern-day satanic mills 2004). It’s reported that working conditions in some of the UK call centers are appalling. This accompanied by low wages and repetitive tasks, has been found to result in decreased levels of job satisfaction and high levels of depression.

The health and Safety Laboratory in Sheffield, reports call agents to be at risk of higher mental health problems than in other occupations. Poor psychological well-being of call center representatives can be attributed to working in call centers that employ more than 50 staff, working on a permanent contract and having to adhere to scripts strictly when handling calls as ones performance is measured. Call centers agents sense of powerlessness and frustrations is exacerbated by automated systems that permit them either merely a few seconds between calls

or none at all. Employees in call centers spend an average of two years in the industry before moving on (call centers are modern, 2004).

2.6 Reactions of call center agents towards call centre work

The responses of employees to call centre work vary considerably. There is evidence, for example, that some employees find this form of service work greatly rewarding and enjoy the social interaction and peer support that can exist in many centres. For others, the work is a tiring, stressful and emotionally exhausting experience. The cross-national studies conducted by Frenkel et al. (1998; 1999) and also reported in Korczynski (2002) suggest quite high levels of overall job satisfaction, with nearly three-quarters of their respondents reporting some satisfaction with their job (Korczynski, 2002, p. 95).

The greatest satisfaction appears to be derived from customers ('helping people') and from the camaraderie and social support that develops in the work environment. Furthermore, performance monitoring seemed to be fairly widely accepted, although that acceptance was contingent upon the style of supervision.

Over half were satisfied or very satisfied with the methods of control used and three-quarters said the controls helped them to work better (Frenkel et al., 1998). On the other hand, levels of job stress among the staff were quite high, with just over two-thirds of employees reporting a degree of stress (Korczynski, 2002). Deery, Iverson and Walsh (2002) also found a relatively high incidence of stress amongst call centre staff in Australia. Using survey data from almost 500 telephone service operators in five call centres in the telecommunications industry they found that emotional exhaustion was associated with high workloads and pressure from management to maximize customer throughput at the expense of customer service.

There are other ways of responding to an uncongenial or unsatisfactory work environment. Although strike action is rare and unionism still somewhat embryonic, employees do contest and challenge management decision-making and resist unfair treatment and unacceptable customer behaviour. However, in interactive service, as Macdonald and Sirianni (1996, p. 4) note, 'contests over control of the labour process are often more implicit than explicit'. Such contests may occur in a number of ways.

Rosenthal (2002), for example, shows how workers can use management's forms of normative control – the language of consumer service – and direct control – the monitoring and measurement systems – to turn the tables on management and defend their rights and protect their interests. She argues that the espoused values of service quality invariably emphasize

respect for employees, as well as for customers, and that the language of such programmes can supply workers with an effective means of enforcing standards of fair treatment.

In this context, Lankshear et al. (2001) found that tensions between service throughput and service quality often forced managers to compromise on quality measures and allowed the creation of 'organizational spaces in which employees could develop and defend their own definitions of professionalism and good performance'.

Call centre workers may confront management in other ways as well. Mulholland (2002), for example, has reported that call centre agents often challenge management's discourse about care, quality and teamwork by subjecting it to derision, they may also disregard the organization's scripted conversational rules and search for weaknesses in the organization's control systems and construct free spaces for themselves 'which provide an amnesty from normal emotional labours' (Sturdy and Fineman, 2001). In addition, they may deliberately redirect calls to other service operators, enter misleading activity codes into the system or simply hang up on offensive customers (Knights and McCabe, 1998).

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2.7 Call centers in Kenya

Jones (2003) provides several insightful factors that are critical in selecting call center locations locally or internationally. He says that an investor has to consider the availability and cost of modern telecommunications, the availability, cost, skill attainment and reliability of local labour, whether the site to build the call center is accessible by public transport as this is linked to labour availability. An investor also needs to look at the cost and availability of existing properties or sites, the availability of local business support network as well as the State, provincial and local government incentives. Finally an investors needs to consider incentives and subsidies currently available in that state.

The establishment of call centers in Kenya is a fairly a new industry which is rapidly growing in anticipation of the completion of the Fibre Optic cable in July 2009 which will reduce data and internet charges as well as the need to enjoy a piece of the cake in Business Process Outsourcing BPO. Kenya's planned \$100 million undersea cable will connect Mombassa with Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates. Known as The East African Marine Systems (TEAMS), it will bring the cost of bandwidth down to levels similar to what India is paying and improved quality in voice calls and internet services. Currently call centers in Kenya rely on an outdated satellite system where echoes caused by latency--the time gap created when calls travel some 36,000 kilometres through space and back—which lower the call quality.

Like in many African nations unemployment is a major challenge affecting the Kenyan labour force. The growth of the call center industry in Kenya due to business process outsourcing will provide job opportunities and absorb the unemployed Kenyan population. According to Brown (2004) the call center industry now provides the most promising solution to combat the high unemployment rate in South Africa. South Africa is the leading call center and business process outsourcing center in Africa and the third in the world after India and Philippines. It has approximately 940 call centers providing employment to over 11,000 people in 2008 as reported by the Datamonitor.

Kenya is also making great strides towards becoming an outsourcing giant in Africa. This is because of the following factors; Kenya's strategic location in Eastern part of Africa, bordering the Indian Ocean, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia and it's a hub to the rest of Africa and the world. Kenya prides itself in its large pool of professional workers, trained both within the country and in institutions in Europe, North America, Australia and other parts of the world. For years, Kenya has produced well-educated professionals, fluent in English and highly trained in various fields in IT among others. In addition Kenyan professionals are English speaking with neutral accents which enhances easier communication with the rest of the world. Kenya has a conducive business environment and a convenient time zone GMT+3.

Business Process Outsourcing which is a form of outsourcing involving contracting the operations and responsibilities of a specific business function or processes to a third party provider in addition companies have identified the importance of customer satisfaction as a strategy to gain a competitive advantage hence have adopted the creation of call centers or subcontracting their front office e.g. customer related issues to other call centers. This has contributed to the growth of call centers in Kenya.

The practice of outsourcing is evolving from simply a cost cutting measure to a core strategic activity, aimed at enabling companies to focus on their core business. The internet has also created opportunities for firms to outsource some functions to companies outside their own countries taking advantage of various benefits such as different time zones and lower labour costs. Outsourcing to companies in developed countries provide American and European firms access to highly skilled, well educated staff able to provide high quality services at reasonable costs. In the call center working environment, job satisfaction of call center agents is an important factor contributing to the success of the call center. It's essential in enhancing increased productivity, staff retention and producing high quality of service or product which leads to customer satisfaction.

In the Kenyan context job satisfaction in call centers has not been researched extensively. More studies on job satisfaction of call center agents are necessary because according to Levin (2004) motivated employees provide better customer service than unmotivated ones. Tirdmarsh (2003) argues that for call centers to compete successfully, the main corporate goal should be employee satisfaction.

2.8 Conceptual framework

The important independent variables influencing job satisfaction are given below in figure 2.1.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

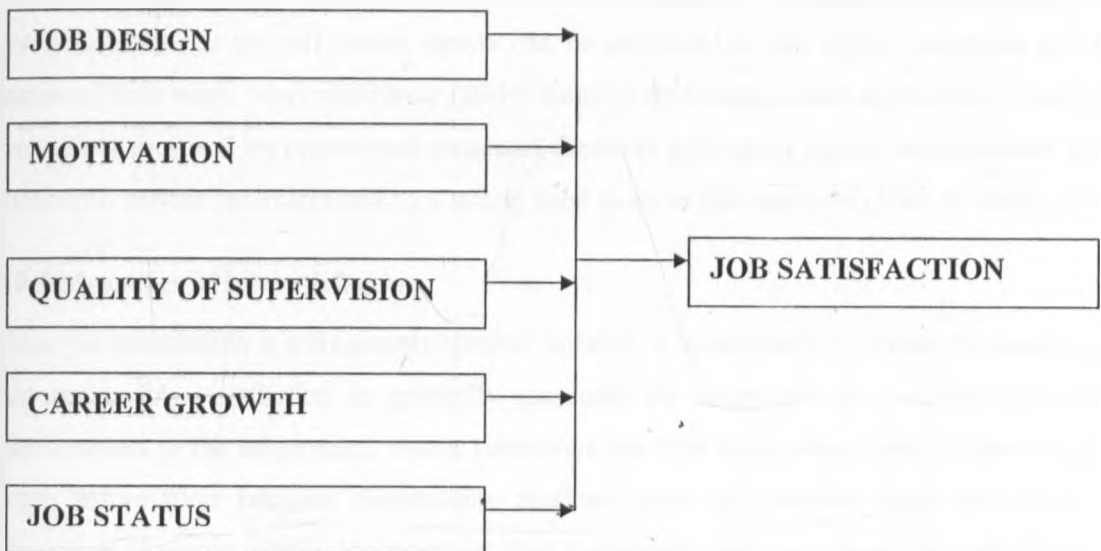


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

2.9 Dependent variable: Job satisfaction

According to Rose and Wright (2005), call center agents are generally associated with low levels of satisfaction because their work is fairly low skilled, they also claim that there is sociological research evidence showing that low-skilled work does not result in intrinsic satisfaction. As such employees are lead to seek extrinsic satisfaction through pay and other compensatory mechanisms. The standard measure of job satisfaction contains two subscales of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction, which can be combined to give an overall score. Extrinsic satisfaction refers to external aspects of the job, such as working conditions, promotion prospects, industrial

relations climate. Intrinsic satisfaction refers to 'psychological' aspects of the job, such as recognition for good work, opportunity for development, autonomy.

Holdsworth and Cartwright (2003) report that lack of control and the call center agent's feelings of stress are particularly associated with reduced levels of job satisfaction.

Levin (2004) purports that there is a direct connection between job diversity and call center agent satisfaction. He also suggests that call center agents can be empowered with interesting work offline such as putting them in charge of the recruitment and selection of call center agents and creating a frontline customer relationship team.

According to Tidmarsh (2003), by simply adding or maintaining employee satisfaction programs organizations can significantly improve the bottom line by reducing high levels of staff turnover and absenteeism, while maximising the output. According to Thomson (1993), the high stress levels experienced by call center agents can be attributed to the highly repetitive and boring nature of their work. Marr and Neely (2004) mention that management approaches in call centres are mainly focussed on operational measures therefore call center agents are motivated by being successful service providers and by a strong need to serve the customer (Marr & Neely, 2004).

2.9.1 Measures of job satisfaction

Since job satisfaction is a frequently studied variable, it is necessary to review the existing scales that exist. Job satisfaction is generally measured by interviews or questionnaires that are administered to the employees. While interviews are time consuming, they do provide more in depth information because respondents disclose more information about the issues under discussion (Spector, 1997). He mentions that the easiest way to measure job satisfaction is by using one of the existing scales as these scales have already been tried and tested and their reliability and validity have already been established. There are many scales that abound for measuring job satisfaction. According to Muchinsky (1993), the literature on job satisfaction is confusing because some researchers measure satisfaction on a global level, while others measure the facets of job satisfaction with the result that the facets being measured are not necessarily the same. This study was conducted using the job satisfaction survey.

The Job Satisfaction Survey developed by Spector (1985 as cited in Spector, 1997) measures nine facets of job satisfaction. The nine facets measured in the scale, includes the five facets measured by the Job Descriptive Index JDI. The JSS has been discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Muchinsky (1993) reports that there is no one best measure of job satisfaction. The researcher should use the questionnaire that measures the facets of job satisfaction that are

relevant to the study providing that the questionnaire the researcher uses is reliable and valid measures of assessment.

2.10 Independent variables

The independent variables influencing job satisfaction are, job design, motivation, quality of supervision, career growth and job status.

2.10.1 Job design in the call center

Job design can be defined as the way that a set of tasks, or an entire job, is organized. It helps to determine: what tasks are done, how the tasks are done, how many tasks are done, and in what order the tasks are done. The concept of Job design is ascribed to Davis and & Canter (1955), who saw job design as the organisation or structuring of a job to satisfy the technical – organisation requirements of the work and the human requirements of the person performing the work. David's work led him on to identifying a number of design problems relating to the structuring of jobs. These were; identifying job boundaries, identifying the factors at work in jobs, determining methods of estimating and controlling these factors, developing systematic design methods and developing criteria for evaluating designs. In facing up to these problems, Davis concluded that in order to achieve more effective performance and greater job satisfaction on the part of the employee, it was necessary for jobs to be meaningful to the individual concerned.

Job design involves administrative areas such as: job rotation, job enlargement, task/machine pacing, work breaks, and working hours. A well designed job will encourage a variety of 'good' body positions, have reasonable strength requirements, require a reasonable amount of mental activity, and help foster feelings of achievement and self-esteem. Work design is concerned with the characteristics of the jobs. Hackman & Oldham (1975, 1976, 1980) identified five 'core job characteristics' that relate to the motivation and satisfaction of employees.

These characteristics are: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback from the job

Its felt that using these principles, one can map the design of the job onto a framework that enlarges the work, enriches it and even interchanges it with other jobs so that people are more challenged by their work and feel more empowered to make a difference in what they do. E.g. allowing the call center agents to account manage areas of branches that they were taking reservations for so that could spend an hour each day liaising with those branches to check on their CSI and how specific customers were handled after the reservation was taken.

Finally and crucially, it's important not to isolate the workers at the call center from the business they are supporting and include them in communication related to the business performance and changes so they can feel an impact of their contribution. In any role, creating this inclusiveness and involvement in the work has the potential to galvanise the workforce. Research in all areas of discussion on retention figures shows the involvement of workers in the design of their jobs and their rewards as a worthwhile consideration in how to make work more attractive, rewarding and central.

These work characteristics are clearly of importance in examining the call centre context. Frequently, call centre jobs are characterised as having limited task variety, that is, call center agents carry out the same tasks over and over again. Sometimes the agents are expected to say the same sentences repeatedly. This is called scripting. Frequently, call handlers have little control over when they take calls and how long they spend on them, as calls are routed to them automatically via an ACD (Automatic Call Distribution) system, and often there are strict limits on the maximum time a call handler should spend on each call.

Research has demonstrated clear associations between work design characteristics and employee effectiveness, (Parker & Wall, 1998). Employees with low task variety report poorer mental health, i.e., greater stress and employees with higher job control report greater job satisfaction (Terry & Jimmieson, 1999). Employees in jobs with 'poor role characteristics' also report job dissatisfaction. By poor role characteristics, we mean the jobs where employees have high role conflict, for example, they experience contradictory demands from managers, and low role clarity, for example, where employees are not sure what is expected of them. These aspects of work and jobs (low/limited task variety, low control, high role conflict and low role clarity) are greatly affect job satisfaction of the call center agents in the call center environment.

A. Measures of performance in the call center

Marr and Nelly define performance measurement as the process of quantifying the efficiency and effectiveness of past action. They further state that the assessment of an agent's measure which is normally used, such as the total number of calls made, is of little worth when it comes to measuring value. In order for managers in call centres to manage well they "need to ensure that the measurements accurately portray what management wants to be measured. Marr and Neely further state that call centres produce many measures of performance with the majority of the measures being operational ones i.e. having to do with the telephone (for example average talk time).

Gilmore and Lesley cited in Marr and Neely (2004) have identified common measures, which appear on wall displays in various call centres. These are: the number of calls answered within past ten minutes, calls waiting to be answered, that is “in the queue”, the number of representatives currently taking calls, the number of representatives waiting to take calls (free call center agents), the number of ‘not ready’ agents and lastly, by the number of agents on outgoing calls or on a call to another agent.

Other than the operational measures of performance stated above, there are other elements that affect performance; however these are rarely addressed in call centre performance measurement systems. These aspects include the links between the following: customer satisfaction and both profitability and loyalty, service quality and customer satisfaction and, employee satisfaction and service quality.

Marr and Neely suggest that call centres could use the four scale model as the basis for performance measurement, not only to identify the training needs of the call center agents but also as a recruitment and selection guide for the agents. The four-scale model includes the following subscales,

- I. Adaptiveness refers to customers’ expectations of call center agents to modify their behaviour so as to deal with interpersonal situations and adapt to various other situations.
- II. Assurance refers to the agent’s ability to provide explanation and security thereby ensuring customers of confidentiality and also, the agent’s ability to treat information discreetly.
- III. Empathy is regarded as a subscale since customers expect call center agents to empathise with their emotions and current situations.
- IV. Customers expect that a call center agent should have the necessary authority in order to handle their problems or concerns.

B. Lack of control in the call center

The work design changes that call centre managers have already implemented which include performance monitoring and telephone technologies, are both pervasive features of the call centre work environment, on well-being. 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 emphasize the degree of control call centre workers have over the job, handing 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.

Research has shown that much of the work is closely monitored, tightly controlled and highly routinized. Computer technology plays a critical part in this process; work can automatically be allocated to telephone operators to minimize waiting time, the speed of work and level of downtime can continuously be measured and the quality of the interaction between the service provider and the customer can be assessed remotely and at management's discretion.

The strong focus in call center environments on efficiency and control is not only reported to result in high levels of employee stress and turnover but also on a lack of focus on customer orientation and service priorities, which contributes to the difficulty frontline staff have in being customer oriented (Knight & McCabe, 1998; Taylor & Bain, 1999; Wallace et al, 2000). Call center agents have to adhere to scripts strictly when handling calls as ones performance is measured. Call centers agents sense of powerlessness and frustrations is exacerbated by automated systems that permit them merely a few seconds between calls. Employees in call centers spend an average of two years in the industry before moving on (call centers are modern, 2004).

C. Measuring emotions in the call center

It has been observed that call centre workers are not only expected to execute their physical tasks competently and efficiently and to display knowledge of their organization's products, procedures or practices but also they are held accountable for their emotions (Hochschild, 1983). Rather than exerting physical labour to manufacture a product the service labour process involves the use of emotional labour to manufacture relationships (Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996). Employees are expected to display emotions that help create a desired 'state of mind' in the customer. In order to achieve this result call centres have increasingly sought to specify and control the way in which employees presented themselves to customers. In many service exchanges 'workers' moods, facial expressions and words are subject to supervision' (Leidner, 1996, p. 30). Employees are frequently supplied with tightly scripted dialogue and are required to follow highly detailed instructions when interacting with customers.

The use of scripts has been described by Taylor and Bain (1999, p. 109) as an attempt to structure the 'speech of workers into a series of predictable, regulated and routinised queries and responses'. In their interaction with customers, employees are often forced to express emotions they do not feel (such as being friendly or happy) or suppress emotions that they genuinely do feel (such as anger or frustration). This can lead to feelings of inauthenticity and emotional dissonance and result in anxiety and burnout. In addition call center agents are faced with challenges such as a limited time to address the customers query while effectively controlling the

call and adjusting the tone of their voice accordingly while displaying friendly and happy emotions.

D. Working hours, work and life balance

Issues relating to working time arrangements and work–life balance also affect the well-being of call centre workers. Many service providers, as Paul and Hews (2002, p. 21) note, are under pressure to maximize availability and operate into the night or round the clock to meet demand or respond to customers in different time zones. This can affect both the work and personal lives of employees. In the UK call centres are said to have some of the longest opening hours in Europe (Call Centres, 2002, p. 44). Indeed, a survey found that almost a third of all call centres operated 24 hours a day. Of those, more than three-quarters were open 365 days a year. Surprisingly, few offered staff flexibility to balance their working and caring responsibilities. Only a third of organizations offered staff some choice over shift arrangements; a quarter offered flexitime and 20 per cent provided some choice over starting and finishing times. Paradoxically, the survey disclosed that the organizations recognized that improvements in work–life balance would improve staff retention, minimize absenteeism, and reduce stress (Call Centres, 2002).

2.10.2 Motivation

Motivation can be defined as the need or drive within an individual that drives him or her toward goal oriented action. It's the process in which people choose alternative forms of behaviour in order to achieve personal goals. The extent of drive depends on the perceived level of satisfaction that can be achieved by the goal. The goals sought by individuals may be relatively tangible such as monetary reward or promotion or intangible such as self esteem or job satisfaction. The rewards available to an individual may either be intrinsic rewards or extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards are those that derive from the individuals own experience, they would be a sense of achievement or a feeling of self esteem. Extrinsic rewards on the other hand are those which are conferred on a person from outside e.g. a pay rise or a promotion.

Put simply motivation can be described as behaviour caused by some stimulus but directed towards a desired outcome as indicated in figure 2.2.

Stimulus -----Appropriate Behaviour-----Goal/ Desired outcome

Figure 2.2: The basic motivation model

Employee motivation is key to any business, but none more so than the call centre industry, which traditionally has to deal with high staff turnover, high stress levels along with high levels of customer expectation. When call center agents enjoy their work at the call center, find the job to be challenging and like the work environment, they will usually put forth their best efforts and perform their tasks enthusiastically. In other words they are motivated to produce at optimal output. On the other hand if the agents cannot wait for the end of the workday, are alienated from the results of their efforts, and feel their work is terribly boring, they will not do their best. They will do the minimum required to keep their jobs. That is to say that they are not very motivated to perform well.

According to research carried out by Chris Benneir 2006 in South African call centers, most informants state that 24 months is the maximum length of time agents typically can stay motivated being on the telephone all day. Levin (2004) argues that motivated employees have a reciprocal effect on the entire organization. He claims that motivated employees provide customers with better service than unmotivated employees. Customers who are pleased with a service that he or she receives are more inclined to buy more products and remain loyal in using your services. When customers buy more, the organization's profitability and chances for success naturally increase.

Thus, a main motivation for doing a good job in a call centers is the acquisition of practical communication skills and work experience, in order to achieve promotion. Some call centers in countries like Germany offers the employees different opportunities for individual career advancement (Frank Kleeman 2002). Marr and Neely (2004) mention that management approaches in call centres are mainly focussed on operational measures therefore call center agents are motivated by being successful service providers and by a strong need to serve the customer (Marr & Neely, 2004).

Chris Benneir (2006) states that the kind of motivation offered in the call centers fall into what he describes as the "carrot" school of leadership. Call center management advocates for things such as incentives, bonuses, certificates, lunches, time off, games, gift certificates, awards, contests, pizza, donuts, and more time off. He further argues that there is something fundamentally flawed about a workplace where the most sought after award is time off... or any other variety of extrinsic reward. Benneir (2006) further argues that, when we take our agents' focus off of the work itself, and place it on the "goodies" that they will get for doing the work; we diminish the intrinsic value of that work itself. Its no woneder that the performance boost that

the management desperately seeks, lasts no longer than the incentive period. Extrinsic motivators bring limited and short-term value. Benneir argues that the best way to achieve lasting motivation among the call center agents is to focus on the intrinsic motivations that people bring to their work and to encourage their development.

Edwards Deming, other pioneers of Total Quality Management and Peter Drucker have since argued that all workers, not just managers, are motivated by the same intrinsic urges; to do good work, to do it well, and to be part of something bigger than themselves. However most of the motivational “techniques” being advocated in call centers today still have not caught with this line of thought but are caught in a time warp. Intrinsic motivation among call center agents is harder to achieve. Its impact is harder to document than are those short-term cause and- effect relationships induced by extrinsic motivational gimmicks. But in the long run, it is the cure for under-performance, high turnover, and employee and customer dissatisfaction.

2.10.3 Quality of supervision in the call center

According to Research by Wallace and Eagleson, *The sacrificial HR Strategy in Call Centers*, there was a divergence between managers and subordinates in their perceptions of management style. With heavily task-focused control systems, this type of organization would appear to need supportive supervision to manage employee burnout (Frenkel et al., 1998). Consistent with this observation, the case studies revealed that 11 out of 14 of the team leaders and center managers identified themselves as being relations or relations/task focused. However, 20 out of the 27 team leaders and agents regarded their direct supervisor as being task-focused. Some agents noted that an individual's style would change when they were promoted into a management role. When someone who was regarded as relations-focused is appointed a team leader, they become task-focused within a short period of time. The productivity focused control systems were seen as being reinforced by managers. The complementary support function appeared to be absent in the perception of most employees.

Task-oriented managers organize and structure groups to achieve targets efficiently through actions such as setting up chains of communication and specifying working methods and standards. They focus on results, aided by the technology and the performance measurement and reward systems. The relations-oriented manager on the other hand, is concerned both with supporting individuals and maintaining harmonious cooperative relationships among the group. Part of the role of these managers is to reduce role ambiguity and provide feedback in order to prevent burnout (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993) and the consequent loss of enthusiasm. They put

systems in place to detect and counsel staff with problems and rotate staff to lessen stress. They provide training to enhance the ability of front-line staff to deal with difficult customers.

However, in the call centers studied, the relations-oriented management was not present. Instead, the management of the efficiency/service tension was pushed onto the front-line. There was a clear understanding of the savings that could be gained by turning over burnt-out staff rather than investing in programs targeting morale, commitment and enthusiasm. By deliberately selecting individuals whose intrinsic motivation was service, high service levels were assured and the need for the organization to provide this motivation external to the employee was removed. By accepting burnout and high turnover, there is a reduced need for the organization to manage the emotional labour.

Many of the organizational costs of people management and development are eliminated by the sacrificial HR strategy. Rather than relying on expensive management practices such as relations-oriented management and development support programs, service effectiveness is ensured by selecting people who are intrinsically motivated to serve the customer. Service performance is thus a function of employee internal characteristics rather than the organizational management processes.

2.10.4 Career growth in the call centers.

According to Rose Wright, high staff turnover and absenteeism are major characteristics of call centers. In Kenya due to high unemployment rates, most call center agents are higher national diploma holders or university graduates from diverse academic backgrounds. They join call centers in anticipation of being absorbed into the job market, and in in-house call centers, with the hope of being promoted to their areas of expertise. However most of them leave the call centers after working for a short period of time due to lack of clear career trajectories. Most call centers in Kenya offer few opportunities for career growth and even when they are present they are not enough for the many number of agents. It's important to note that the organisation structure of a call center involves almost 95% call center agents and the remaining 5% involves the support staff, IT technicians, supervisors and a call center manager. This provides few opportunities for career development resulting to high staff turnover and absenteeism in search for a more fulfilling career.

Benneir (2006) states that there is a need to pay attention to opportunities for career advancement for call center agents, both internally and externally and to other firms or industries where their skills may be applicable. According to the report Employment in Europe (European Social Fund,

2001, p. 74) the main factors that constitute job quality are job security, access to training, and career development opportunities. Hence, promotion is considered a key aspect of job quality. In the context of this debate, call centre jobs have been widely and generally criticised for their low quality and have often been referred to as dead-end jobs (Deery and Kinnie, 2002; Dormann and Zijlstra, 2003).

Nevertheless, there is conflicting evidence as to the precise quality of jobs in call centres. On the one hand, various authors present call centre work as part of a new organisational structure that works according to Tayloristic principles (Ferne and Metcalf, 1998; Garson, 1988). This suggests an image of call centre employees carrying out standardised and routine tasks, with a high degree of work division (Isic et al., 1999), reduced qualifications and status, and little or no possibilities for promotion (Deery and Kinnie, 2002). On the other hand, other authors consider that not all jobs in call centre are the same (Frenkel et al., 1998). Indeed, even within the same call centre, different jobs may vary considerably in terms of their nature, character (Bhatt, 2000) and quality (Valverde et al., 2007a). According to the European Social Fund (2001) access to career development opportunities is a key component of quality jobs. The data collected from the call centres shows a limited use of promotion in this sector. Over half of all call centres analysed have not promoted practically any agents or supervisors in the previous year. These results suggest the absence of a clear and structured promotion policy in call centres and a lack of consolidated internal labour markets in this sector (Baron et al., 1986).

Even though the use of promotion is not widespread among call centres, we cannot go so far as to say that the lack of promotion is a defining characteristic of the sector as a notable number of call centres do employ promotion. It appears that despite the stereotype of the sector (Deery and Kinnie, 2002; Dormann and Zijlstra, 2003), call centre jobs are not necessarily and intrinsically low quality jobs and that a diverse range jobs are offered (Batt, 2002). Hence, it is important to identify and examine in detail those call centres that promote more employees in order to understand the factors that shape its use.

It's also important to look at the types of call centres that are more likely to promote more employees. Specifically, the size of the call centre, belonging to a larger organisation and being outsourced, increase the likelihood of greater use of promotion. In the case of size, it is clear that the larger the organisation, the more jobs in higher positions it can offer. Similarly, call centres that are part of a larger organisation offer jobs that may constitute an entry port to other parts of the organisation. However, companies may not normally be able to change their structural variables and it is thus important to turn to the analysis of the management practises that may

influence the opportunities to increase the use of promotion. This implies that even if the structural characteristics of the organisation leave little room for promotion, call centre managers that are aware of this can decide to put in place a set of initiatives, such as more stable workforces, and that in turn, this may help in establishing a more active promotion policy.

From this research we can say that the call centre sector is characterised in structural terms by flat organisations with reduced job ladders (Holman et al., 2007) and in turn by reduced possibilities for promotion. Even though the sector includes an important proportion of call centres that do not promote virtually any employees, there are also many organisations that have attempted to use promotion among their management practices. This study has identified the instances where more promotion takes place. Indeed, the relationship between the variables employed and the use of promotion demonstrates that call centre work does not necessarily translate into jobs of low quality in terms of promotion opportunities. Furthermore, since the use of promotion has shown to be determined by structural factors and other management practices, call centre managers are encouraged to establish such practices to facilitate the use of promotion. This could improve this important aspect of job quality, and also help to dispel the stereotype of call centres as providers of low quality jobs.

2.10.5 The perceived status of call center work

The perception of call center work by call center agents, customers and management is an important factor to consider as far as job satisfaction of call center agents is concerned. The status of the job is low and many agents are always in pursuit of better and more satisfying work which can offer them challenge and autonomy. From the nature of call center work, it can be observed that the job is stressful, routinized and offers little room for career development. Infact it can be argued that call center work isn't a career and as such resulting to high staff turnover in call centers and absenteeism of call center agents. In some in-house call centers especially in the telecommunication sector, call center agents are lowly looked down upon by other members of the organisation due to the nature of their job. It's usually believed that the job isn't a specialized job and can be done by high school graduates as it holds no particular specialised skills. The only required skills of a call center agent are communication skills, interpersonal skills and liaison skills. These are skills which can be easily achieved by anybody who would like to become a call center agent.

Due to high unemployment rates in Kenya, call centers have provided job opportunities for young university graduates who have completed their first or even second degrees. These graduates join the call centers in the hope of not only making a living and acquiring good

communication skills but also hoping to be absorbed into other departments within the organisations which will match with their academic backgrounds and provide a more fulfilling career. It becomes quite frustrating for these agents when they are not absorbed into any other department within the organisation due to the high number of call center agents and increasing competition in the call centers. As a result the working environment in the call center and the nature of call center work causes great job dissatisfaction to the agents and they search for more fulfilling careers.

It's also notable that call centers don't provide challenging job opportunities and hence in case of a job opening in the call center, the call center agents find themselves as the only candidates to fill in the positions as no one else in any other department wants to work in the call center. This results to a perceived negative or low status of call center work by call center agents.

The reason for escaping into 'patchwork' careers is in the qualifications and the labour market conditions of that particular stratum of the workforce characterized by its vocational, yet non-academic qualification structure with limited vertical career opportunities. Corresponding to the vocational qualification is a subjective claim to have an 'interesting' occupation, i.e. some kind of 'post-materialist' intrinsic motivation to work. The relatively high qualification, added by skills acquired all throughout the career opens up opportunities to change positions, and to find 'better' jobs in terms of one's subjective preferences.

The tight controls and close monitoring in the call center due to computer technology as well as the working hours in a call center contribute to a low job status of call center work. In addition the agents have to handle not only phone raged customers but also all kinds of customers raging from the semi-literate customers who don't understand the instructions or information they are offered by call center agents to the difficult customers who look down at call center agents and constantly remind them that the customer is always right. The customers that the company is serving also tend to have a negative attitude to call center agents and treat them badly. They can be impolite, rude abusive and the agent has to take in all the negative words and abuses that come his or her way. There are also several prank calls made by customers in toll free lines in the call centers and more so especially late at night.

Call center management also contributes to the low status of call center work by failing to redesign the job. In many call centers the leadership style of management is mostly authoritarian and the mode of communication is usually top down. Due to all these factors, most call center agents are always in pursuit of a more meaningful career and it can be argued that call center

work holds a low perceived status by not only the management and customers but also by the call center agents.

2.11 Existing theories and views of job satisfaction

According to Muchinsky (1993), job satisfaction has been a subject that has interested researchers over the years for three reasons. Muchinsky (1993) classifies the first reason as cultural saying that as a nation, America, places importance on individual freedom as well as personal growth and opportunity. The second reason is functional, since job satisfaction as a concept has intrinsic value but it is also related to other significant variables such as performance, absenteeism and turnover. The third reason why researchers have been interested in job satisfaction is due to historical reasons. Muchinsky (1993) claims that the Hawthorne studies, which began in the 1920s, caused many psychologists to shift the variables they studied considerably. The core of current work on designing jobs to improve work life can be founded in early research (Muchinsky, 1993). The Hawthorne studies started by investigating ways in which changes in physical conditions affected the level of production. In the first studies, changes in illumination were made, which resulted in changes in productivity regardless of the direction of the change in illumination. Irrespective of the reason, when subjects in experiments show enhanced performance due to the experimental situation, it is referred to as the “Hawthorne” effect (Gruneberg, 1979).

Job satisfaction is without a doubt a topic that is studied most frequently in organizational behaviour research and psychology (Gruneberg, 1979; Spector, 1997). According to Muchinsky (1993) the reasons why researchers should be concerned about job satisfaction can be found in the humanitarian and utilitarian perspectives. While the humanitarian perspective trades on the premise that all human beings deserve respect and fair treatment, the utilitarian approach is centred more on the implications of job satisfaction on organizational effectiveness. In support of the utilitarian approach the key focus for most managers is on productivity, hence it follows that they are in favour of a workforce that is satisfied as opposed to one that is dissatisfied (Organ, 1990). The old model, which states that a happy worker is a productive worker “was rejected as simplistic” (Organ, 1990, p. 109). According to Muchinsky (1993) job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon with multiple theories and each theory contributes to one’s understanding of the concept of job satisfaction. The three approaches that Muchinsky (1993) reviews are, the Intrapersonal Comparison Processes, the Interpersonal-Comparison Processes and the Two-Factor Theory. These approaches are known as content theories.

2.11.1 Content theories

Firstly, Intrapersonal-Comparison Processes compares a person's wants that is, the standard to what the person actually receives. A small difference reflects a high degree of satisfaction (Muchinsky, 1993). Some researchers argue that the standard is derived from human needs, while others argue that it is derived from human values. Needs are easier to assess than values as individuals all have the same basic needs but individuals do not all share the same values. According to this theory, job satisfaction is an individual process in that satisfaction is a measure of how a job satisfies needs or complies with values (Muchinsky, 1993). Secondly, Interpersonal-Comparison Processes differs from the first in that job satisfaction is determined based on an individual's perceptions of others and not on individual needs or values per se. The basis of this theory is that people make comparisons between themselves and others in similar roles and use that to determine their own feelings of job satisfaction. This theory views job satisfaction as a social process by postulating satisfaction is obtained by making a comparison with others in similar jobs (Muchinsky, 1993).

Thirdly, there is the controversial Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which presents two classes of work variables. The first is satisfiers (for example sense of recognition, achievement and the intrinsic interest of the work itself). These satisfiers, or motivators, as referred to by Gruneberg (1979) correspond to the higher levels in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which is further mentioned in the following section. When these satisfiers are present in a working situation, they lead to job satisfaction but when they are absent they do not lead to job dissatisfaction. The second is dissatisfiers (for example, good salary, pleasant working conditions), which corresponds to the lower levels in Maslow's hierarchy.

These factors result in job dissatisfaction when they are inadequate, but do not result in job satisfaction when they are adequate (Gruneberg, 1979). Herzberg suggests that these two factors determine how satisfied or dissatisfied an individual will be in his or her job and proposes working conditions as the basis of job satisfaction. It is thus the difference between satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Gruneberg, 1979). This theory has however been criticized for inadequate data collection techniques and failure to replicate it (Muchinsky, 1993). In spite of this, Herzberg's theory has impacted positively on research on job satisfaction and is the most popular theory of job satisfaction. According to Thomson (1993), Herzberg proved that increased performance is not necessarily the result of increased job satisfaction, since other factors; for example, appropriate reward systems also need to be taken into account.

2.11.2 Process theories

The aim of process theories is “to describe the interaction between variables in their relationship to job satisfaction” (Gruneberg, 1979). The difference between content theories (such as Maslow and Herzberg) and process theories is that content theories focus on distinguishing the factors that contribute towards job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Process theorists on the other hand, believe that job satisfaction is not only determined by the nature of the job and its context, but also by the “needs, values and expectations that individuals have in relation to their job” (Gruenberg, 1979). For example, some individuals have a greater need for promotion than others and if the job does not satisfy that need then the individual is likely to be more frustrated.

Gruneberg (1979) claims that all process theorists believe that job satisfaction is dependant on the relationship between the individual and his or her working environment; however, they share differing views as to which process relates to job satisfaction.

The theories discussed below are; the Expectations and Equity Theory, Reference Group Theory, Needs/Value Fulfilment Theories and Maslow’s Needs Hierarchy Theory.

A. Expectations and equity theory

This is one of the more well-known discrepancy theories, which argues that job satisfaction is caused by “the inverse of one or more discrepancies between the perceived nature of the job and some other state” (Beehr, 1996, p. 70). The lower the discrepancy, the more satisfied the employees are. According to Beehr (1996) discrepancy theories of job satisfaction are frequently used by organizational psychologists to explain job satisfaction. Gruneberg (1979) claims that one’s surroundings have a direct impact on the way individuals behave. When the happenings in the world are different from the individual’s frame of reference, he or she is often discontented, which sometimes results in the individual modifying his or her interpretation of the world. It is claimed that if an individual finds that he or she is getting less than another, that individual becomes dissatisfied since individuals relate what they are getting with what others are receiving. The core belief of the equity theory is that “we have a concept of what is reward for our efforts” (Gruneberg, 1979, p. 20).

In other words, a psychological contract is established between the employer and the employee suggesting that for a certain amount of effort there should be a certain amount of reward. It is claimed that satisfaction will be achieved only when rewards and efforts are viewed as reasonable in terms of the rewards of others such as friends or colleagues. The major problem with the equity theory is that it is so broad that it is able to account for anything (Locke, 1976 as

cited in Gruneberg, 1979). While the equity theory is able to account for some facets of satisfaction, it is not able to account for them all. Beehr (1996) states that research on the equity theory has reduced possibly due to the complexity in conducting research in the topic.

B. Reference group theory

It is claimed that several theorists are of the opinion that reference groups, that is groups to whom the individual relates, is crucial in understanding job satisfaction (Hulin & Blood, 1968 as cited in Gruneberg, 1979) but the Reference Group Theory fails to answer several relevant questions. For example, do individuals have a choice in determining the reference group to which they belong? It is suggested that this theory is inadequate as it is only able to provide a limited explanation of how individuals view the inputs and rewards of the job as fair.

C. Needs/value fulfilment theories

Gruneberg (1979) claims the extent to which individuals are satisfied with their jobs is affected by the different meanings individuals attach to what they value in a job. The Needs/Value Fulfilment Theories are another version of the discrepancy theories. The discrepancy involving needs was once a very popular means of measuring the discrepancy between needs and actual job situations but are no longer in favour by organizational psychologists although they still view "the general idea of discrepancies and of job satisfaction as some sort of need satisfaction" (Beehr, 1996, p. 72). According to Gruneberg (1979), several theorists have argued that the degree to which the job satisfies needs is a determinant of job satisfaction. Vroom (1964 as cited in Gruneberg, 1979) investigated two forms of the need fulfilment theory, namely, the subtractive model and the multiplicative model. Both theories however, are ineffective and it is suggested that need fulfilment models have more of intuitive appeal.

D. Maslow's needs hierarchy theory

In addition to the theories reviewed by Muchinsky above, Gruneberg reviewed Maslow's Theory. This was one of the first theories that proposed a needs hierarchy; with needs split into lower order and higher order needs. The needs, as identified by Maslow are basic psychological needs; safety and security needs; social (affection) needs; esteem needs and self-actualisation needs. The first three are the lower order needs and the last two are the higher order needs. According to Gruneberg (1979), Maslow suggests that man is only able to be concerned with the fulfilment of higher order needs if the lower order needs are met first. How this relates to a job situation is that once lower order needs for payment and security have been met, will the

employee look for job satisfaction. While Maslow's theory was not developed to account for job satisfaction, several theorists have used his theory in this manner (Gruneberg, 1979).

From all the above-mentioned approaches there is no doubt that job satisfaction is indeed a dependent variable, that is, the variable being measured and one that is not under the experimenter's control (Howell, 1989). According to Robbins (1993), managers should be concerned with the level of job satisfaction for three main reasons. Firstly, there is clear evidence that dissatisfied employees skip work more often and are more likely to resign. Secondly, it has been demonstrated that satisfied employees have better health and live longer. Thirdly, satisfaction on the job carries over to the employee's life outside the job. According to Muchinsky job satisfaction in a group can yield different results to job satisfaction in an individual, since job satisfaction is an individual response. Early findings of job satisfaction led researchers to believe that employees could have an overall level of job satisfaction that ranged from very low to very high, but later studies showed that several factors contributed to the way a worker feels about his or her job. Muchinsky provides the example that two employees can have totally different feelings about their co-workers and their pay but, in fact both contribute to the overall feelings they have on job satisfaction.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter analysed the research design, the target population, the sampling design and procedure, the data collection instruments and data analysis procedure that was used in the study.

3.2 Research design

The main aim of the researcher was to collect data on factors influencing job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi province. The data was collected from the identified call centers. Data collection was based on the dependent variable, Job Satisfaction and how it was influenced by the independent variables namely, job design, motivation, career growth, status of the job and quality of supervision in Nairobi's call centers. In order to make the research more conclusive, the researcher employed a mixed research design of both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The qualitative research design that was employed in this study was descriptive research. The main reason for using this research design was because it was able to give detailed information about a situation that was already in existence. Job satisfaction in Kenyan call centres is a main concern affecting the call center agents. The researcher also used quantitative research design to show the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. After the data was collected and analysed the data was presented using tables. Frequencies and percentages were used to show the influence of the independent variables; job design, motivation, career growth, job status and quality of supervision and how they influenced the dependent Variable job satisfaction in the call centers.

From the target population identified in the study, a small sample was drawn from the entire population. A survey with the use of questionnaires which were self administered was conducted and the data collected was analysed using SPSS package. The questions were standardized so as to enhance consistency and accuracy from the respondents.

3.3 Target population

The population under study in this research paper was call center agents from three different industries; telecommunication sector, commercial sector, and the financial services sector in Nairobi province. Three different call centers in each sector were selected and a sample size was drawn from each. The target population in this study was any call center agent who had been

working in any of the three call centers for a period of more than six months. The age of the call center agents varied from 20 years to 55 years. Special attention was taken to ensure that there was gender equity in the sample selection process as there were more women working in the call center compared to the men.

3.4 Sampling procedure

The research was conducted using a small, but carefully chosen sample which was used to represent the entire population as it was believed to reflect the characteristics of the population from which it was drawn. There was a total of 1480 call center agents in the three call centers selected. The telecommunication call center selected has 1200 employees; the commercial center selected had 250 employees while the financial sector selected has only 30 call center agents. Out of these call center agents 70% were females while 30% were males. The sample size was 148 respondents representing 10% of the entire population and comprised of 44 males and 104 females. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), the sample size of a given population should represent 10% of the population.

Table 3.1: Sampling frame.

Sex of Respondents	No of respondents in Telecommunication	No of respondents in Commercial Sector	No of respondents in the Financial Services
Males	36	7	1
Female	84	18	2
Total	120	25	3

Probability sampling technique was employed in this study giving all the call center agents not only a known but also an equal chance of being selected as part of the sample; this would ensure the population selected was unbiased.

The call center agents under study would be selected randomly from each call center under study and would be required to fill in the questionnaires. From the sample the researcher would be able to gather data and information on job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi province. The research would provide an insight on the major factors that affect job satisfaction in the call centers and ways of enhancing or sustaining job satisfaction in the call centers in Nairobi province. Some of the factors that were incorporated while selecting the sample were age and gender.

3.5 Data collection methods

Data was collected from the sampled population comprising of 90 call center agents from the three selected call centers. The main tool of data collection was through the use of questionnaires (see appendix 2). The method of data collection was the survey design which involved questioning people and recording their responses for analysis.

The questionnaires were distributed to the participants via email as the call center agents are computer literate and have access to email and internet facilities. The reason for selecting the email questionnaires was because the costs are low; biasing error was reduced as the respondents were not influenced by the interviewer characteristics or techniques. The questionnaires would provide a wide access to geographically dispersed samples at low costs and the respondents would have time to think about their answers or consult from other sources.

Once the questionnaires had been emailed to the respondents, they were given a period of two days to fill in the questionnaires and email them back. Follow up calls will be made to respondents who have not submitted the questionnaires within 4 days. In case the respondents are unable to respond via email, copies of the questionnaires will be issued to the respondents to fill in. An introduction letter from the University of Nairobi will also be emailed to the different call centers' management to assure them that the data collected will only be used for academic purposes.

3.5.1 The job satisfaction survey

Previous research on the link between job satisfaction and performance suggests that "demographic variables of age and gender should be included as controls" (Cranny et al., 1992; Ellingson et al., 1998 cited in Moshavi & Terborg, 2002). Moshavi and Terborg (2002) suggest that some characteristics have been shown to influence the outcomes of employee and customer satisfaction. Therefore the present study included a demographic profile of call center agents. Most job satisfaction surveys are done using questionnaires; an existing job satisfaction questionnaire, the Job Satisfaction Survey, was used in the study.

There are advantages and disadvantages of using an existing scale. Firstly, available scales cover major facets of satisfaction. The Job Satisfaction Survey covers 9 facets of job satisfaction. Secondly, existing scales have been used a sufficient number of times to provide norms. The reliability levels of these existing scales are acceptable and lastly, it saves the researcher the additional cost and time required to develop a scale from the beginning. The job satisfaction survey also has its disadvantages. The scale is limited to only those facets that the developers choose to place in their instruments therefore will not include more specific areas of satisfaction

or dissatisfaction that are issues for certain types of organizations or particular organizations. Job satisfaction scales are not necessarily tailored to the call center agents experience; therefore it doesn't always address every issue that affects the day-to-day life of a call center agent.

The Job Satisfaction Survey measured 9 facets of job satisfaction these are; pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, nature of work and communication. The researcher chose to use this particular scale to measure the job satisfaction of the staff, as it is affordable, it has a high degree of validity and reliability and it is appropriate for the study. The reliability of the JSS can be evaluated in terms of internal consistency reliability and test-retest reliability. The former refers to how well the items of a scale relate to each other and for that, the JSS scores range between .60 and .91. According to Spector (1997), the accepted minimum standard is 0.70. Test-retest reliability "reflects the stability of the scale over time" and in this area the JSS scores range between .70 and .74,

3.6 Validity and reliability

To enhance the success of the research, validity and reliability were maintained. Validity involved the interpretation of what a scale would actually assesses; that is, if the scale would be able to assess peoples feelings as far as their jobs were concerned Spector, (1997). Five of the JSS scales correlated well with the corresponding subscales of the JDI and these correlations ranged from 0.61 for co-workers to 0.80 for supervision. Previous research carried out in South Africa, showed that the Job Descriptive Index had been successful in measuring Job Satisfaction (Okpara, 2002) and its was therefore an acceptable scale for measuring job satisfaction in this paper. The questionnaire was constructed using valid wording of the questions, logical expression of the questions using the appropriate format. The questionnaire is free from bias and it's relevant to the research study.

Reliability on the other hand was maintained as the questionnaire has been designed to provide constant results with repeated measurement. So as to enhance reliability on the study, the researcher employed the test and retest method which involved administering the same test twice to the same group after a period of time.

3.7 Operational definition of the variables

Table 3.2 Operational definition of the variables

VARIABLE	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	INDICATOR OR MEASURE	SCALE
JOB SATISFACTION.	The extent with which people like or dislike their job.	The extent to which the job is viewed as; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleasant, • Unpleasant, • Stressful 	Ordinal scale
JOB DESIGN	The organisation or structuring of a job to satisfy the technical organisation requirements of the work and the human requirements of the person performing the work.	The extent to which the job is perceived as; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging, • Interesting, • Routinized and boring • Tightly controlled, • Complex, • Measured on realistic performance targets. • Working on shifts. • Job rotation 	Ordinal scale
Motivation	Motivation can be defined as the need or drive within an individual that drives him or her toward goal oriented action	The extent of the level of motivation, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of motivation • Use of rewards • Motivation through promotion, • Motivation programmes by management. 	Ordinal scale
Career Growth	The process of managing an individual's career within or between organisations	The extent to which there is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career growth; • Clear career trajectories, 	Ordinal scale

	through acquisition of skills and knowledge that assists to improve ones career.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to training and career development programs, • Clear promotion policy. • Development of skills. 	
Quality of Supervision	Defines the way in which the activities undertaken by supervisors to oversee the productivity and progress of employees who report directly to them.	<p>The extent to which the following styles of management are used,</p> <p>Application of rules and procedures,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of expression, communication, • Type of management style, • Task or result oriented managers • Delegation, 	Ordinal scale
Perceived Status of the job	The importance or position that the job holds within an organisation and how the job is valued.	<p>The extent to which the status of the job is perceived as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding a high status, • Valuable 	Ordinal scale

3.8 Data analysis

The returned questionnaires were edited and coded to enable analysis of the data and the raw data was analysed and interpreted using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

The results were presented by frequency tables and percentages. Frequency tables and percentages provided a clear indication of how the respondents felt the variables affected their levels of job satisfaction and this gave a measure of the strength of the variable.

Cross tabulation was used as a method of control to ensure that there was no bias of the results.

CHAPTER FOUR.

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the results and findings on the factors influencing job satisfaction among call center agents in Nairobi province. The findings are outlined according to specific objectives of the study. The findings are based on the responses from the questionnaires filled and information gathered on the research questions. The first specific objective was to establish the effect of job design on job satisfaction. The second specific objective was to determine the effect of the perceived status of the job on job satisfaction. The third objective was to determine the influence of the quality of supervision on job satisfaction. The fourth objective was to establish the effect of career growth on job satisfaction and the fifth objective was to determine the influence of motivation on job satisfaction.

4.2 Data analysis

A total of 148 questionnaires were emailed to the selected call center agents in the three identified call centers and they were given a week to fill them in and email them back. Out of the 148 questionnaires, 58 questionnaires were not returned. Only 90 questionnaires were filled in and emailed back. Of the 90 questionnaires, 30 of them had not been completely filled but only 60 were completely filled in. Therefore the return rate of the questionnaires was 40%.

The questionnaires were later sorted, edited, coded and analysed using descriptive statistics. Analysis of the data was done using Statistical Package for the Social Science SPSS software. The results of the findings were presented using frequencies and percentages and were afterwards interpreted.

4.3 Demographic data

The bio-data obtained was organized into the following areas: gender, age, length of service, type of calls handled and preferred shifts. This was done in order to give a feel of the nature of the respondents and provide more insight of the levels of job satisfaction in the call center.

The bio- data of the call center agents in the three call centers is given in the following tables

4.3.1 Gender of the respondents

Table 4.1 shows the gender of the call center agents comprising of 33% males and 67% females. This indicates that the females are two times more that the males in the call centers.

Table 4.1: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Distribution	
	Frequency	Percentage
Male	20	33
Female	40	67
Total	60	100

4.3.2 Age of the respondents

Table 4.2 show the age of the call center agents, 72% of the respondents were aged between 25 years to 30 years while 28% of the respondents were aged between 31 years to 44 years. The findings indicate that most of the respondents were below 30 years and can be assumed to change careers often. The high concentration of young employees in the call center indicates that call centers usually employ young graduates or diploma holder's right after completion of their studies and this can be seen as an entry level job for most of call center agents in the job market. After some time the agents pursue their career in other fields or in other organisations.

Table 4.2: Age of the respondents

Age	Distribution	
	Frequency	Percentage
25-30yrs	43	72
31-44yrs	17	28
Total	60	100

4.3.3 Length of service of the respondents

Table 4.3 indicates the length of service of the respondents, 36% of the respondents have worked between 1 to 2 years, while 52% of the respondents worked between 2 to 4 years and only 12% of the respondents had over 5 years work experience. Most of the call center agents are young and after working in the call center for a short time, they enrol in school to further their studies and pursue their careers. In addition most call center work is an entry level job for most of the call center agents hence they acquire some work experience, skills and knowledge that enable them to get better jobs in their field of study.

Table 4.3: Length of Service of the respondents

Length of Service	Distribution	
	Frequency	Percentage
1-2yrs	22	36
2-4yrs	31	52
Over 5yrs	7	12
Total	60	100

4.3.4 Type of calls handled by the respondents

Table 4.4 indicates the type of calls handled, 45% of agents handled inbound calls while 55% of the agents handled both inbound and outbound calls. None of the agents handled outbound calls only. Most of the respondents deal with receiving call from customers and making follow up calls to customers.

Table 4.4: Type of calls handled by the respondents

Type of calls handled	Distribution	
	Frequency	Percentage
Inbound calls	27	45
Inbound and Outbound calls	33	55
Total	60	100

4.3.5 Preferred shifts of the respondents

The information on table 4.5 indicates the preferred shifts of the call center agents, 73% of the respondents preferred morning while 22% preferred afternoon shifts and only 5% preferred night shift. Most of the respondents prefer morning shift as they are young and attend evening classes, in addition, some of the respondents are young mothers with families to take care of. Since most of the respondents are still young they prefer morning shifts so that they can have time for a social life in the evening with their families and friends.

Table 4.5: Preferred shifts of the respondents

Preferred Shifts	Distribution	
	Frequency	Percentage
Morning Shift	44	73
Afternoon Shift	13	22
Night Shift	3	5
Total	60	100

4.4 Data analysis and interpretation of the independent variables

The independent variables affecting job satisfaction in this study were identified as; job design, motivation, career growth, the quality of supervision and the perceived status of the job. The researcher will attempt to analysis feedback from the respondents on these variables.

4.4.1 The effect of job design on job satisfaction

On the variable of job design, nine items were formulated to obtain the data. Table 4.6 indicates the items that the respondents were asked to choose from.

Item B1 asked the extent to which the respondents enjoy doing their work and 87% of the respondents call center agents either strongly agreed or agreed while 13% of the respondents disagreed. Therefore most of the agents enjoyed doing their work. The respondents felt motivated and satisfied when they were able to help a customer. In item B2 the respondents were asked whether the work they did was interesting and challenging, 65% of the respondents disagreed while only 35 % of the respondents agreed. This is because most of the call center work is highly monotonous and in addition most call centers have not adopted job rotation to make the work more interesting.

Item B3 asked the question whether the work done is highly routinized and 97 % of the agents either strongly agreed or agreed and only 3% of the respondents somewhat agreed, none of the respondents disagreed. Call center work is highly routinised and offers no challenge to the young agents this results to lack of interest from the agents eventually. Item B4 asked to what extent the work done was tightly controlled offering little room for individual freedom and 75% of the agents either strongly agreed or agreed, while 17% of the respondents somewhat agreed and only 8% of the respondents disagreed. Call center work is tightly controlled and monitored through the use of computer systems. Item B5 asked whether the respondents preferred shift work to working normal hours and 60% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed, while 27% of the respondents somewhat agreed and only 13% disagreed. The agents' preference for shift work is due to the flexibility of working hours as opposed to working normal regular hours of between 8 am to 5pm. In addition the pay is always higher due to overtime and shift allowances.

Item B6 asked whether the respondents always worked their preferred shift and 30% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed, while 42% of the respondents somewhat agreed and 28% disagreed. In many call centers agents are always given the opportunity of selecting their preferred working shifts and most of the agents end up working their preferred working shifts unless when there are too many requests resulting to agents being forced to work their non preferred shift. Item B7 asked whether the the job schedule in the call centers allowed time for family and friends and personal time and 65% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed, while 23% of the respondents somewhat agreed and only 12% of the respondents disagreed. Due to flexibility of working hours, the agents are still able to make time for their personal lives and work at the same time. In addition call center working hours are always fixed to either six hours, eight hours or nine hours a day hence an agent isn't obligated to work despite the volume of the workload after the end of their shift.

Item B8 asked to what extent the performance targets were realistic, and 50% of the respondents agreed, while 18% of the respondents somewhat agreed. 20% of the respondents disagreed and 12% strongly disagreed. Item B8 asked to what extent monitoring occurs to provide feedback of the respondents, 76% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed, while 13% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 7% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. Monitoring of call center work always gauges the performance of a call center agent as it measures all aspects of their work, there is both quantitative and qualitative assessments that are regularly done and this provides the performance of an agent and is used mostly for performance reviews at the end of the quarter or year.

4.4.1.1 Overall evaluation of job design on job satisfaction

The results of the findings on job design were ranked from number 1 to 9. Number 1 represented the variable which held the strongest level of dissatisfaction while number 9 represented the variable with the least job satisfaction. On the overall evaluation of job design, most of the call center agents claimed that their work was highly routinised. This was followed by those who claimed that they enjoying doing their job, others claimed that work was tightly controlled and offered little room for individual freedom. At the same time, others claimed that monitoring took place to provide feedback on their performance as others preferred shift work from normal working hours and the same claimed that their job schedule allowed time with their family, friends and to enjoy other aspects of their life, there were some who agreed that the performance targets were realistic and the least agreed that work was interesting and challenging. Generally, the findings indicate that 65% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that job design had an affect on job satisfaction, 20% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 12% of the respondents disagreed and 3% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.6: Job design of the respondents.

ITEM NO	JOB DESIGN	1= Strongly agree	2= Agree	3= Somewhat agree	4= Disagree	5= Strongly disagree	(1+2)	Position
B1	I enjoy doing my work	60%	27%	0	13%	0	87%	2
B2	My work is interesting and challenging	3%	32%	1%	34%	30%	35%	8
B3	The work I do is highly routinized	45%	52%	3%	0	0	97%	1
B4	The work I do is tightly controlled and offers little room for freedom.	48%	28%	17%	7%	0	76%	3
B5	I prefer shift work to working normal hours.	43%	17%	27%	13%	0	60%	6
B6	I always work my preferred shift.	5%	25%	42%	28%	0	30%	9
B7	My job schedule allows me time with my family, friends and to enjoy other aspects of my life	40%	25%	23%	0	12%	65%	5
B8	My Performance Targets are realistic.	0	50%	18%	20%	12%	50%	7
B9	Monitoring takes place to provide feedback on my performance.	27%	48%	13%	8%	3%	75%	4
	Total	30%	35%	20%	12%	3%	65%	

4.4.2 The influence of motivation on job satisfaction

On the variable of motivation, six items were formulated to obtain the data. Table 4.7 indicates the items that the respondents were asked to choose from. Item B10 asked the extent to which the respondents were well motivated to do their work. From the responses, only 35% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed while 65% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Most of the call center agents don't feel motivated to perform better at work as the kind of motivation offered is extrinsic hence lasts a short time resulting to dissatisfaction.

Item B11 asked the extent to which the respondents were still motivated as they were when they joined the call center and only 13% of the respondents somewhat agreed while 62% of the

respondents disagreed and 25% of the respondents strongly disagreed. This can mainly be attributed to the short term effects of rewarding and motivating agents using rewards and gifts.

Item B12 asked the extent to which the managers motivate the agents to perform better, 28% of the respondents agreed, while 27% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 37% disagreed while 8% strongly disagreed. An agent should be self motivated to do their work as this will result to a long term effect, external motivation from a supervisor or manager either using rewards or threats is short lived. Item B13 asked the extent to which the respondents felt motivated by being recognised and rewarded for their good performance and 92% of the call center agents either strongly agreed or agreed, while only 5% of the respondents somewhat agreed and only 3% of the respondents disagreed. Item B14 asked the level to which the respondents felt motivated when they achieving a sense of achievement, esteem and fulfilment and 37% of the respondents strongly agreed while 63% of the respondents agreed, none of the respondents disagreed. From the two responses it shows that the type of motivation offered in the call center is based more on rewards and recognition rather that call centers striving to encourage the importance of achieving a sense of achievement, esteem or fulfilment.

Item B15 asked the extent to which the respondents only did the minimum that was required in order to keep their job and 15% of the respondents agreed, while 18% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 52% disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed. The call center agents enjoy doing their work and don't do the minimum that is required to keep their job, most of them would be motivated and satisfied with their job if their work was made to be more interesting and less routinized.

4.4.2.1 Overall evaluation of motivation on job satisfaction

The results of the findings were then ranked from number 1 upto 6. Most of the call center agents claimed that they were motivated by a sense of achievement, esteem and fulfilment from their work. This was followed by those who claimed to feel motivated when recognized and rewarded for their good performance. The agents were least motivated by their work and claimed that they did not receive any motivation from their managers or encouragement to perform better at work. Many of the respondents disagreed that they don't perform to their minimum to keep their job. Generally, the findings indicate that 45% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that motivation has an affect on job satisfaction, 11% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 35% of the respondents disagreed and 9% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.7: The influence of motivation on job satisfaction.

ITEM NO	MOTIVATION	1= Strongly agree	2= Agree	3= Somewhat agree	4= Disagree	5=Strongly disagree	(1+2)	Position
B10	I am well motivated to do my work.	17%	18%	0	58%	7%	35%	3
B11	I am still motivated as I was when I joined the call center.	0	0	13%	62%	25%	0%	6
B12	The managers motivate us to perform better at work.	0	28%	27%	37%	8%	28%	4
B13	I feel motivated when I am recognized and rewarded for my good performance.	30%	62%	5%	3%	0	92%	2
B14	I am motivated when I achieve a sense of achievement, esteem and fulfilment from my work.	37%	63%	0	0	0	100%	1
B15	I only do the minimum that is required in order to keep my job.	0	15%	18%	52%	15%	15%	5
	Total	14%	31%	11%	35%	9%	45%	

4.4.3 The effect of career growth on job satisfaction

The third independent variable in the study was career growth; six items were formulated to obtain the data. Table 4.8 indicates the items that the respondents were asked to choose from.

Item B16 asked the extent to which the respondents acquired more skills and knowledge for their careers, 27% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed, while 30% somewhat agreed, 43% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed. Item B17 asked to what extent the call center had a clear career path and 5% of the respondents call center agents strongly agreed, 25% agreed, while 18% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 22% of the respondents disagreed and 30% strongly disagreed. Item B18 asked the level of access to training and career development programmes offered in the call center, 5 % of the respondents strongly agreed and 20% agreed, while 13% of the respondents somewhat agreed 40% disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed. Item B19 asked the extent to which there was a clear promotion policy in the call center, 27% of the respondents agreed, and 15% of the respondents somewhat agreed while 37% disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed. Item B20 asked the extent to which the performance and length of stay in the call center created chances for a promotion, 45% of the respondents agreed,

while 12% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 13% disagreed and 30% strongly disagreed. Item B21 asked the extent to which the level of education and skills acquired determined the respondents chances for a promotion and only 5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 20% agreed, while 13% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 40% disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed.

4.4.3.1 Overall evaluation of career growth on job satisfaction

According to the findings of the results, most of the call center agents claimed that access to training and career development programmes offered in the call centers were crucial for the respondents career growth and job satisfaction, this was followed by those who claimed that the respondents performance and length of stay at the call center determined their chances for a promotion and hence career path was clear, however, most of the respondents disagreed to have acquired more skills and knowledge for their career. In addition, most of them claimed that there was not a clear promotion policy at work. The level of education and skills acquired was the lowest placed among the call center agents.

Table 4.8: The effect of career growth on job satisfaction

ITEM NO	CAREER GROWTH	1= Strongly agree	2= Agree	3= Somewhat agree	4= Disagree	5=Strongly disagree	(1+2)	Position
B16	I am acquiring more skills and knowledge for my career.	5%	22%	30%	33%	10%	27%	4
B17	There is a clear career path in the call center.	5%	25%	18%	22%	30%	30%	3
B18	There is access to training and career development programmes offered in the call center.	10%	42%	22%	20%	7%	52%	1
B19	There is a clear promotion policy at work.	0	27%	15%	37%	22%	27%	4
B20	My performance and length of stay determines my chances for a promotion.	0	45%	12%	13%	30%	45%	2
B21	My level of education and skills acquired determine my chances for a promotion.	5%	20%	13%	40%	22%	25%	5
	Total	6%	45%	28%	41%	30%	52%	

4.4.4 The influence of quality of supervision on job satisfaction

The influence of the quality of supervision was the fourth variable the paper looked at and five items were formulated to obtain the data. Table 4.9 indicates the items that the respondents were asked to choose from. Item B22 asked the level of focus of the supervisor to be on target and results and 65% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed, while 18% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 10% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed. Call center supervisors are mostly concerned with targets and results and are always closely monitoring the agents to ensure that the targets are met. Item B23 asked the extent to which the supervisor was concerned with supporting individuals and maintaining harmonious cooperative relations among the group, 15% of the respondents strongly agreed and 35% agreed, while 23% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 20% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed.

Item B24 focused on the level to which the supervisors provided timely feedback and communication to the respondents on issues affecting their work, 75% of the agents either strongly agreed or agreed, while 2% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 13% of the agents disagreed and 12% strongly disagreed. Item B25 looked at the extent to which the supervisors delegated work to the respondents and 65% of the call center agents either strongly agreed or agreed, while 23% of the respondents somewhat agreed and 12% disagreed. Item B26 asked the extent to which the respondents were able to express themselves freely to their supervisors and 100% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed and none of the respondents disagreed.

4.4.4.1 Overall evaluation of quality of supervision on job satisfaction

Most of the findings indicate that the call center agents are able to express themselves freely to their supervisor or manager, followed by those who either strongly agreed or agreed that the supervisor provides timely feedback and communication to issues affecting work. While others agreed that the supervisor or team leader delegate work to the call center agents, this was followed by those who claimed that the supervisor main focus was on targets and results and last but not least, the respondents agreed that the supervisors were less concerned both with supporting individuals and maintaining harmonious cooperative relations among the group.

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Table 4.9: The influence of the quality of supervision on job satisfaction

ITEM NO	QUALITY OF SUPERVISION	1= Strongly agree	2= Agree	3= Somewhat agree	4= Disagree	5= Strongly disagree	(1+2)	Position
B22	The supervisor's main focus is on targets and results.	22%	43%	18%	10%	7%	65%	3
B23	The supervisor is concerned both with supporting individuals and maintaining harmonious cooperative relations among the group.	15%	35%	23%	20%	7%	50%	5
B24	The supervisor provides feedback and communication	48%	25%	2%	13%	12%	75%	2
B25	Does your supervisor or team leader delegate work to the call center agents.	3%	62%	23%	12%	0	65%	3
B26	Are you able to express yourself freely to your supervisor or manager?	50%	50%	0	0	0	100%	1
	Total	18%	53%	25%	13%	5%	71%	

4.4.5 To what extent does the perceived status of the job have on job satisfaction

The last independent variable was the perceived status of the job and six items were formulated to obtain the data. Table 4.10 indicates the items that the respondents were asked to choose from. Item B27 asked the extent to which the work provided a sense of fulfilment and self esteem to the respondents, 20% of the agents agreed, while 17% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 43% disagreed and 20% strongly disagreed. This is due to lack of challenge, monotonous nature and sometimes dealing with phone raged customers. Item B28 focused on the level of the status of the job and 3% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 17% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 58% disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed. Call center work lacks challenge to the young graduates and hence is lowly viewed as it can be done by a high school leaver after some training.

Item B29 asked the extent to which the member in different departments valued the work of the respondents and only 5% of the respondents agreed, while 18% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 50% disagreed and 27% strongly disagreed. Due to the low job status and nature of work, the job is viewed as a low job as it's not challenging nor interesting. In addition the close

supervision and monitoring makes it more of a factory in the 18th century. Item B30 asked the extent to which the customers valued their work and 13% of the respondents strongly agreed, 52% agreed, while 27% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 3% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed. Customers always appreciate the agents for the good service they receive. Item B31 asked the extent to which management valued the work of the call center agents and 45% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed, while 25% of the respondents somewhat agreed, 22% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed. Management always strive to offer incentives and training programmes to motivate the agents hence to some extent it values their work.

4.4.5.1 Overall evaluation of perceived status of call center work on job satisfaction

The findings indicate that most of the respondents generally agreed that the customers appreciated their work, and that the call center management valued their work, while others claimed that their work provided a sense of fulfilment and self esteem, many felt that other members in different departments don't appreciate or value their work and most of them claimed that the work at call centers held a low job status. Generally, 28% of the respondents were satisfied as compared to 72% of the respondents who were dissatisfied. Therefore the perceived status of call center work is considered as low by other departments affecting job satisfaction.

Table 4.10: The perceived status of the work on job satisfaction

ITEM NO	PERCEIVED STATUS OF CALL CENTER WORK.	1= Strongly agree	2= Agree	3= Somewhat agree	4= Disagree	5=Strongly disagree	(1+2)	Position in rankings
B27	My work provides a sense of fulfillment and self esteem to me.	0	20%	17%	43%	20%	20%	3
B28	Does your job hold a high job status?	3%	0	17%	58%	22%	3%	5
B29	Do other members in different departments in your organization value your work?	0	5%	18%	50%	27%	5%	4
B30	Do customers appreciate your work and the service you offer to them?	13%	52%	27%	3%	5%	65%	1
B31	Do you feel that the call center management values your work?	5%	40%	25%	22%	8%	45%	2
	Total	4%	23%	21%	35%	16%	28%	

4.5 Job satisfaction survey

The overall results of the derived sub scales of the job satisfaction survey are represented below by frequency table and percentages. The overall results represent the level of satisfaction of the respondents. Item C1 looked at the pay of the call center agents 57% of the respondents claimed that pay was not good as compared to 43% who agreed it was good. The responses were based on whether the employees were paid fairly, the length of having raises, chances of salary increments and appreciation of the work well done. The respondents felt that the pay wasn't good compared to the input they put in at work. Item C2 looked at promotion of the respondents and 45% of the respondents agreed that promotion was good as compared to 55% of the respondents who disagreed. The respondents felt that there were fewer chances for a promotion at the call centers resulting to a stagnant career progress of the call center agents as compared to other places. Item C3 looked at supervision of the respondents in the call centers and most of the respondents (60%) agreed that supervision was good as compared to 40% who felt otherwise. This indicates that the supervisors were competent in their jobs and provided support to the agents.

Item C4 looked at the fringe benefits offered at the call centers, 67% of the respondents agreed that the fringe benefits were good compared to 33% of the respondents who had a negative opinion. These findings indicate that most of the respondents were satisfied with the benefits they were receiving, as compared to what other organizations offered. Most call centers offer incentives such as access to free internet services, telephone calls, medical cover among others.

Item C5 focused on the contingent rewards of the respondents in the call centers, 62% of the respondents agreed it was good as compared to 38% who felt otherwise. The agents felt recognized for their hard work, appreciated and felt their efforts had been rewarded. Item C6 looked at the operating procedures of the selected call centers, 48% of the respondents agreed it was good as compared to 52% who thought otherwise. For those who disapproved of the operating procedure, they felt that there were numerous rules and procedures that made their work difficult, too much to do at work with little time to implement ones ideas.

Item C7 looked at co-workers in the call center 57% of the respondents agreed that their enjoyed working with their colleagues as compared to 43% who felt otherwise. For those who enjoyed working with others, it seemed they worked with competent people who made work easier with less bickering and infighting. In addition they were able to share ideas and provide each other with moral support when handling phone raged customers. Item C8 looked at the nature of work in the call center and 30% of the respondents agreed it was good as to 70 % who felt otherwise.

The nature of work has been discussed in details in the job design section. The last item C9 was communication 40% of the respondents agreed it was good as compared to 60% who disagreed. The disagreeing percentage felt that the communication goals are not clear and maybe ambiguous work assignments and also poor communication between the top management and the subordinate employees.

4.5.1 Overall evaluation of job satisfaction

The findings indicate that most of the respondents were satisfied with the fringe benefits, followed by contingent rewards, quality of supervision, and the nature of the work, co-workers, and operating procedures was ranked sixth, while pay and nature of work offered the least level of job satisfaction. Generally, 53% of the respondents were generally satisfied as compared with 47% of the respondents who were dissatisfied.

Table 4.11: Job Satisfaction Survey

JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY PAUL. E. SPECTOR. DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA	Disagree Very Much	Disagree Moderately	Disagree Lightly	Agree Slightly	Agree Moderately	Agree Very Much		Agreeing Percentage	Position in ranking
Please select the one number for each question that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	4+5+6		
Pay	9	12	10	9	9	8	26	43%	7
Promotion	15	10	10	11	9	7	27	45%	6
Supervision	14	6	4	9	18	9	36	60%	3
Fringe benefits	4	6	11	13	18	9	40	67%	1
Contingent rewards	5	10	9	13	17	7	37	62%	2
Operating procedure	12	8	11	11	10	8	29	48%	5
Co-workers	11	10	6	8	13	13	34	57%	4
Nature of work	20	10	12	3	11	4	36	30%	9
Communication	13	12	11	10	8	6	24	40%	8
Total	92	84	77	105	113	71	289		

4.6 Summary

This chapter analysed the five variables that influence job satisfaction and the findings were interpreted. Job design had a significant influence on job satisfaction as the agents still felt that the work was highly routinised and less challenging. The level of motivation in the call center was low as the management still offered intrinsic motivation which is short lived. The agents felt that there was no career growth in the call center and the quality of supervision was more on targets and results. The perceived status of call center work by other departments was very low.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The discussion of the five specific objectives are presented in this chapter. The discussion will confirm whether the mentioned specific objectives were achieved. In addition conclusions will be drawn from the study and recommendations will be given on the study.

5.2 Summary of findings

Table 5.1 highlights a summary of the main findings.

Table 5.1 Summary of findings

Objective	Major findings
The effect of job design on job satisfaction	Eighty seven percent of the respondents stated that they enjoyed doing their work with 60% of the respondents claiming that they preferred shift work to normal working hours with morning shift being the most popular shift with 73% respondents. 65% of the respondents agreed that the work allowed them time for their social and personal lives; and 50% of the respondents felt that the performance targets were realistic. 97% of the respondents felt that the job was highly routinised while 65% of the respondents felt that the work they were doing was less interesting and challenging. 76% of the respondents felt the work was tightly controlled, however 75% of the agents felt that monitoring took place to provide a timely feedback on their performance.
The effect of the perceived status of the job on job satisfaction	Sixty five percent of the respondents felt that the customers appreciated their work and the service they offered to them and only 45% of the respondents felt that the call center management valued their work. However 95% the respondents felt that the job held a very low status as compared to other jobs and that member in other departments did not value their work and perceived it as a low status job. 63% of the respondents felt that their work did not provided a sense of neither fulfillment nor self esteem to them.

<p>The influence of quality of supervision on job satisfaction</p>	<p>Sixty five percent of the respondents agreed that the supervisors delegated work to them in addition 100% of the respondents agreed that they were able to express themselves freely to their supervisors. 75% of the respondents agreed that the supervisors provided timely feedback and communication on issues affecting their work. However 65% of the respondents felt that the main concern of the supervisors was on targets and results. There were mixed reactions from the respondents on whether their supervisors were concerned with both supporting them and providing harmonious cooperative relations among the group with 50% of the respondents agreed.</p>
<p>The effect of career growth on job satisfaction.</p>	<p>Fifty two percent of the respondents agreed that there was access to training and career development programmes offered in the call center. The call centers did not offer good career opportunities, 70% of the agents felt there was no clear career path and 77% of the respondents felt that they were not acquiring any skills and knowledge for their career. 73% of the agents felt that there was no clear promotion policy at the call centers. The agents also felt that their performance and length of stay did not determine their chances for a promotion as 65% of the agents disagreed. 75% of the respondents felt that their level of education and the skills they had acquired did not determine their chances for a promotion.</p>
<p>The influence of motivation on job satisfaction.</p>	<p>Sixty five percent of the respondents claimed that they were not motivated by their work as call agents in addition 100% felt that they were not as motivated as they were when they joined the call center. 72% of the agents felt that their managers did not motivate them to perform better at work. Only 15% of the respondents agreed to doing the minimum that was required in order to keep their jobs. On the other hand, the respondents would have been more motivated if they were able to get a sense of self esteem and fulfilment from their work that is intrinsically motivated rather than motivation through recognition by rewards (extrinsic motivation) as 100% of the agents felt the same.</p>

5.3 Discussion of the findings

A general discussion of the main findings on the influence of the five variables on job satisfaction is as below;

5.3.1 Effect of job design on job satisfaction

The findings on the variable job design and its effect on job satisfaction shows that the work is highly routinised and monotonous. Taylor and Bain (1999) argued that call center jobs are heavily routinised forms of work. Kleemann & Matuschek (2002) also agreed that a large part of call center work requires that they deal with routine, clerical work.

The findings also indicate that the work is tightly controlled offering little room for individual freedom. According to Fernie and Metacalf 1998, Garson (1998) and Rose and Wright 2005, call centers have been labeled as electronic panopticon, dark satanic mills of the 21st century and human battery farms. The information panopticon is said to continuously remind the workers that although no managers may be physically present, every aspect of their performance may be constantly measured Macdonald and Sirianni (1996).

The findings on job design also indicate that call center work is less interesting and lacks challenge. Kleemann & Matuschek (2002) argue that thorough procedures and continual monitoring considerably control the way service is provided in call centers, therefore a call center agent's job is considered to be one of low complexity (Kinnie et al., 1998 as cited in Moshavi & Terborg, 2003). The level of complexity required by an agent remained relatively low. Specialized technical skills may be appreciated but are not essential for an agent since a large part of their job requires that they deal with routine, clerical work.

Paul and Hews (2002) argue that issues relating to working time arrangements and work-life balance affect the well being of the agents. He argues that many call centers are under pressure to maximize availability and operate into the night or round the clock to meet demands or respond to customers in different time zones. This can affect the personal lives of the employees. However from the findings the respondents claimed that they preferred shift work as compared to working normal hours due to the flexibility of the working hours. In addition most of the respondents agreed that they always worked on their preferred shift with morning shift being the most popular. 80% of the respondents worked in a 24 hour work environment.

The agents felt that the performance targets were realistic and could be used effectively to gauge their performance. This is in contrast to Marr and Nelly (2004) who argued that call centers produce many measures of performance with the majority of the measures being operational ones that is having to do with the telephone e.g. average talk time. All the same the agents felt satisfied with the performance targets.

5.3.2 The influence of perceived status on the work on job satisfaction

Rose and Wright 2005 have characterized call center jobs as dead end with a low status. Fernie and Metacalf (1998) have also defined call center jobs as low quality jobs hence having a low status. The findings on the perceived status of the job show that the respondents agreed that the jobs held a low status for them and felt that they did not provide a sense of fulfilment nor self esteem. The respondents also felt that the nature of the job being less complex and requiring no technical or specialised skills made the job to be viewed lowly by members of different departments in the same organisations especially for in-house call centers. Most of the respondents are university graduates who still have ambition and hopes to excel, however most call center jobs especially in the financial sector are viewed as entry level jobs hence are lowly regarded by the agents themselves and members of other departments. However the respondents agreed that the customers and call center management valued their work.

5.3.3 Effect of supervision on job satisfaction

Wallace and Eagleson argued that there was a divergence between managers and subordinates in their perception of management style. Wallace further argued that most supervisors are more of task focused than being relations focused. He advocated for a balance between task focused and relations focused and stated that a supervisor should be both relations and task focused. From the findings from the respondents, 65% felt that the managers were more task focused as opposed to 50 % who felt that the supervisors were more relations focused. The findings are consistent with Wallace who stated that the productivity focused control systems were seen as reinforced by managers. The complementary support function appeared to be absent in the perception of most employees.

The findings also indicated that the employees were able to express themselves freely to their supervisors and that the supervisors provides timely feedback and communication to issues affecting their work., The respondents also agreed that the supervisor or team leader delegate work to the call center agents hence gave the agents an opportunity to acquire more skills and knowledge outside the calls they handled every day.

5.3.4 Effect of career growth on job satisfaction

Findings from the respondents show that the 70% of the agents felt that the call center did not have a clear career path. Fernie and Metacalf (1998) have characterised call center work as a low status job with few career prospects. Holman et al (2007) argues that call centers are characterised in structural terms by flat organisations with reduced job ladders and in turn by reduced possibilities for a promotion. Baron et.al (1986) states that over half of all call centers analysed had not promoted practically any agent or supervisor in the previous year. These results

suggest the absence of clear and structured promotion policy in the call centers. The findings of this study confirmed this statement as majority of the respondents 59% stated that there was no clear promotion policy as compared to 27%.

Also, in response to whether the respondents acquired more skills and knowledge from their career as call agents, most of them disagreed. On whether the respondents have access to training and career development programmes offered in the call center, most of the respondents agreed and this shows that call centers are dedicated to improve the skills of the agents through training programmes. Loyalty to the call centers mattered most because the performance and length of stay in the call center determined the agent's chances for workers to have a promotion and the same applied if they had good education and skills for the job.

5.3.5 Effect of motivation on job satisfaction

The findings in this paper show that the respondents felt that they were not motivated as they were when they joined the call centers, this shows that the level of motivation decreased with the length of stay in the call center. In a research carried out in South African call centers, Chris Benneir (2006) stated that 24 months is the maximum length of time the agents can typically stay motivated being in the telephone all day. This also explains why the respondents felt that they were not well motivated to do their work.

The findings also indicate that the respondents did not feel motivated by their managers to perform better at work. Benneir (2006) further argues that most of the motivation offered in the call centers fall into what he describes as the "carrot" school of leadership. The call center advocates for things such as incentives, bonuses, certificates, lunches gifts, certificates etc. He states that extrinsic rewards have short term effects hence the reason for the low level of motivation among the respondents. In addition a higher percentage of the respondents (100 %) confirmed that they were more motivated when they achieved a sense of achievement, esteem and fulfilment from their work intrinsic motivation as compared to (92%) of the respondents who felt motivated when they were recognised and rewarded for their good performance. This findings show that as Chris Benneir advocated for intrinsic motivation as opposed to extrinsic motivation has long term effects. Levin (2004) argued that employees who are not motivated, only do the minimum that is required in order to keep their jobs, this is contrary to our findings as the respondents have low levels of motivation but most of them disagreed to doing the minimum that is required in order to keep their jobs

5.4 Conclusions

The results and findings on the factors influencing job satisfaction among call center agents in Nairobi province were mixed:

5.4.1 Effect of job design on job satisfaction

Most of the respondents indicated that they preferred morning shifts compared to afternoon shift and night shift. However, there was no job rotation because the work was highly routinized and tightly controlled with little room for individual freedom as mentioned by most of the respondents who either strongly agreed or agreed on this.

5.4.2 The influence of perceived status on job satisfaction

Most of the respondents claimed that the call centers did not provide a sense of fulfilment and self esteem, the call centre jobs held a low status, work colleagues in different departments did not value each other work. However, on the other hand, the customers and the management appreciated the services and the work of call center agents.

5.4.3 Effect of supervision on job satisfaction

The supervisor's leadership style was seen to be inclined more as being task focused than relations focused. The agents had mixed reactions on this issue but they felt that they were able to express themselves freely to their supervisors. The pressure of meeting targets and results can make a supervisor shift focus to being more task oriented. Indeed most of the agents felt that if one of their fellow agents who was both task focused and relations focused was promoted to a supervisor, the nature of job made them to be inclined more towards being task focused. This is more attributed to the fact that the call centers are infused with two logics, a need to be cost efficient and a desire to be customer-oriented. These objectives are fundamentally contradictory. Call center management is always after results rather than the agents well being.

5.4.4 Effect of career growth on job satisfaction

The call center offered a good career opportunity for the respondents and room for career growth and also room for training and career development programmes. Loyalty to the call centers mattered most because the performance and length of stay in the call center determined chances for workers to have a promotion. On the other hand, the call centers had a clear promotion policy but promotion was based on individual performance and loyalty to the organization.

5.4.5 Effect of Motivation on job satisfaction

Most of the respondents were not motivated by their work; also they were not motivated to perform better at work therefore the call centers did not offer a good opportunity for career

growth. Most of them claimed that they were motivated when they felt recognized and motivated for their good performance and this could lead to a sense of achievement, esteem and fulfilment from their work.

5.5 Recommendations

The researcher gave the recommendations on the variables influencing job satisfaction of call center agents in Nairobi province.

5.5.1 Effect of job design on job satisfaction

Call centers need to have job rotation to break the monotony of the current highly routine job structures at the call centers. The management should redesign the work to make it more interesting and challenging e.g. by involving agents in the recruitment of fellow call center agents, or by involving them in projects in the call centers on a rotational basis. This will enable the agents to acquire more knowledge and skills that will help them to build their careers. In addition call center work should stop appearing as an entry level job into the job market.

5.5.2 The influence of perceived status on job satisfaction

Work colleagues in different departments should appreciate and value the work of the agents. The call center management can promote this by recognising and rewarding the efforts of call center work and promoting a spirit of customer service in the organisation. It would also be good to change the title of the agents to sound as more meaningful e.g. "Support Executives".

5.5.3 Effect of career growth on job satisfaction

Call centers should have a clear career path and growth with clear promotion policies. The management can look for ways of rewarding loyal agents by creating different groups of call center agents e.g senior call center agent etc. The call centers should also invest more on career development training and coaching and create other senior positions in the call centers.

5.5.4 Effect of Motivation on job satisfaction

Call center management should strive more for intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation e.g. through recognition and rewards. Intrinsic motivation has long term effects as compared to extrinsic motivation which has short term effect but is the easiest to achieve. The call center management would gain more by turning over burnt-out staff and investing in programs that targeting morale, commitment and enthusiasm.

5.5.5 Effect of quality of supervision on job satisfaction

Call centers require supervisors or managers who are both relations focused and task focused as there needs to be a balance between the two. This will prevent high staff burn out and reduce the levels of stress in the call centers. In addition this will make the call center work to be more enjoyable to the agents.

5.6 Recommendations for further research

Since the sample population size was too small ($n=60$); with such a small sample group, it is difficult to generalize the results to the entire population which, in this case was 1,580. Some caution therefore needs to be taken in interpreting the results. Increasing the size of the sample group in future could yield more statistically significant results. In addition, the researcher calls upon future researchers to evaluate different factors, other than the ones mentioned on this study, that influence job satisfaction among call center agents in Nairobi province. It would be also good to add other intervening variables e.g. absenteeism, staff turnover, call center performance and see how these would influence job satisfaction.

I would also recommend that call center agents be given first consideration when there is a job opening in a different department.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondent,

My name is Ruth Wanjao, a Masters of Arts student in Project Planning and Management at the University of Nairobi. I am currently carrying out my Research Project on the topic “The Factors influencing Job Satisfaction of Call Center agents in Nairobi”. I am inviting you participate in this research project by filling out this short questionnaire. You will be asked a variety of questions about the factors influencing job satisfaction in your work.

Through your participation, I hope to understand the different factors that influence job satisfaction in the call center. I hope that the results of this survey will be useful in creating an understanding of the present job satisfaction in the call center work environment.

If you have been working in the call center for more than 6 months you can participate in the study. You are not required to put your name or EK number on this questionnaire. I guarantee that your responses will remain confidential and will not be identified with you personally and the results and findings from this research will be used purely for academic purposes. The survey should take you about 30 minutes to complete, kindly take the time to fill it then email it back to me.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact me through the email address provided below.

I greatly appreciate your help in furthering this research endeavor.

Sincerely,

Ruth Wanjao

ruth.wanjao@gmail.com

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

GENERAL INFORMATION.

In this section, you will be asked general questions.

Important! To select your responses, double click the option applicable to you. A wizard opens, under default value select checked. Do this for all questions.

Gender: Male Female

Age: 20 and below 21-24 25-30 31-35 36 -40 40 and above

Length of Service: Below 1 year 1 yr 2 yrs 3 yrs 4 yrs Over5 yrs

Type of calls handled: Inbound calls Outbound calls Inbound and outbound calls

Preferred shift: Morning shift Afternoon shift Night shift

SECTION B

The questions below ask about how you experience job satisfaction in the call center.

Select the option that most represents your opinion on each of the following statements

JOB DESIGN

1. I enjoy doing my work.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

2. I always work my preferred shift. I enjoy doing my work.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

3. My work is interesting and challenging:

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

4. The work I do is highly routinized.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

5. The work I do is tightly controlled and offers little room for individual freedom.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

6. I prefer shift work to working normal hours.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

7. My job schedule allows me time with my family, friends and to enjoy other aspects of my life

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

8. My Performance Targets are realistic.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

9. Monitoring takes place to provide feedback on my performance.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

MOTIVATION

10. I am well motivated to do my work.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

11. I am still motivated as I was when I joined the call center.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

12. The managers motivate us to perform better at work.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

13. I feel motivated when I am recognised and rewarded for my good performance.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

14. I am motivated when I achieve a sense of achievement, esteem and fulfilment from my work.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

15. I only do the minimum that is required in order to keep my job

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

CAREER GROWTH

16. I am acquiring more skills and knowledge for my career.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

17. There is a clear career path in the call center.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

18. There is access to training and career development programmes offered in the call center.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

19. There is a clear promotion policy at work.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

20. My performance and length of stay in the call center determines my chances for a promotion.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

21. My level of education and skills I have acquired determine my chances for a promotion.

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

QUALITY OF SUPERVISION

22. How would you describe your team managers or supervisors leadership style?
 Authoritarian Democratic Autocratic
23. The main focus of the supervisor is on targets and results.
 Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree
24. The supervisor is concerned both with supporting individuals and maintaining harmonious cooperative relations among the group.
 Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree
25. The supervisor provides timely feedback and communication to us on issues affecting our work.
 Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree
26. Does your supervisor or team leader delegate work to the call center agents.
 Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree
27. Are you able to express yourself freely to your supervisor or manager?
YES NO

PERCEIVED STATUS OF CALL CENTER WORK

28. My work provides a sense of fulfilment and self esteem to me.
 Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree
29. Does your job hold a high job status?
 Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree
30. Do other members in different departments in your organisation value your work?
 Strongly agree Agree Somewhat-agree Disagree Strongly disagree
31. Do customers appreciate your work and the service you offer to them?
 Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree
32. Do you feel that the call center management values your work?
 Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Disagree Strongly disagree

SECTION C

JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY PAUL. E. SPECTOR. DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA Please select the one number for each question that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about it.		Disagree Very Much	Disagree Moderately	Disagree Lightly	Agree Slightly	Agree Moderately	Agree Very Much
1	I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	There is really too little chance for promotion in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	My supervisor is quite competent in doing her job	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	When I do a good job I receive the recognition for it that I should receive	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I like the people I work with	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	Communication seems good within this organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	Raises are too few and far between	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	My supervisor is unfair to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organisations offer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tapé.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of my workmates.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I like doing the things I do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	The goals of this organization are not clear to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	The benefit package we have here is equitable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	There are few rewards for those who work here.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I have too much to do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	I enjoy my co-workers	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	There are benefits we do not have which we should have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	I like my supervisor	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	I have too much paperwork	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	There is too much bickering and fighting at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	My job is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	Work assignments are not fully explained.	1	2	3	4	5	6