# *Motivating Engaging Performance:*

## A longitudinal field experiment of self-efficacy at work

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of**

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by

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# Summary

This thesis examined the influence of self-efficacy and employee engagement on work-related performance in organisational settings. Self-efficacy refers to people's judgment in their personal capabilities to mobilise the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). A core construct within social cognitive theory, self-efficacy has been extensively studied by psychologists while its application within organisations has been examined at length by organisation psychologists and management scholars. Although these academic studies have confirmed the integral and influential role self-efficacy has on work motivation and performance, self-efficacy theory has not been widely adopted in management practice. This oversight is arguably attributable to the dominant use of artificial laboratory methods instead of field studies to test the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship within organisational settings. The primary purpose of this thesis is to examine self-efficacy's impact on motivation and performance within organisational settings. This focus has the potential to contribute to both knowledge and testing of theories of self-efficacy and work related performance as well as wider dissemination of results and potential application of self-efficacy research. In contrast, the analogous motivational concept of employee engagement has been developed and applied by consultants within organisational environments and is widely used in management practice. However, there has been little systematic research been undertaken on employee engagement, its relationship to self-efficacy, and consequent impact on performance. The secondary purpose of this thesis is to provide such an investigation.

An experimental design incorporating a novel organisation theatre intervention intended to increase participant self-efficacy was employed to test the relationships between these variables. The study confirmed self-efficacy has a similar influence on work-related performance in organisational settings that laboratory studies had previously found and that employee engagement is a related but independent predictor of work-related performance. The study also demonstrated organisation theatre interventions effectively act as mechanisms for lower-level empowerment. The thesis draws on the field experiment's impact on self-efficacy, work performance and empowerment to make a contribution to the self-efficacy, employee engagement and organisational change literatures while having the potential to enhance the impact of self-efficacy research on management practice.

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# Thesis Certification

I, William Richard Carter, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate School of Management, Macquarie University, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted to any other academic institution for qualifications.

Richard Carter
May 2011

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# Introduction

What motivates people to work? Few topics have generated as much management and academic interest in the organisational behaviour and social psychology fields. Indeed, the topic of work motivation plays a central role in the field of management - both practically and theoretically. Academic research in the field has a rich history (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 2002; Herzberg, 1968; Latham & Pinder, 2005; Locke, 1997; Maslow, 1970; McClelland, 1987; McGregor, 1985) while the search for high performance in business has historically been seen as a question of motivation (Fox, 2006). Although motivation and the related concept of employee engagement are hot topics in business (Saks, 2006; Trinca, Fox, & Hatch, 2006), work motivation theory development has stagnated (Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004) and there have been calls for new perspectives for the 21st century (Locke & Latham, 2004) as well as suggestions we are entering a new era in work motivation (Kanfer, 2009). This dissertation aims to address these viewpoints through an exploration of social cognitive theory's application to work motivation by using organisation theatre interventions designed to enhance participant's self-efficacy beliefs in a controlled field experiment.

## Background

Work motivation has been defined as "the psychological processes that determine (or energise) the direction, intensity, and persistence of action within the continuing steam of experiences that characterise the person in relation to his or her work" (Kanfer, 2008, p. 3). Consequently work motivation is a psychological process resulting from the interaction between the individual and the environment (Latham & Pinder, 2005). The strong influence of both psychology and social psychology on the state of knowledge is illustrated by Locke and Latham's (2004) article in the Academy of Management Review where they presented Locke's (1997) preliminary attempt at integrating work motivation theories. The theories presented in the model included: Personality, Valence-Expectancy, Goal, Social Cognitive, Job Characteristics, Attribution and Distributive & Procedural Justice but left out theories

with highly limited support such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1970) and Deci's self-determination theory (Deci, 1976) or that were no longer influential such as organisational behaviour modification (Luthans & Kreitner, 1985) where the effects of rewards were found to be mediated by psychological processes such as self-efficacy. Although this model provided a comprehensive list of psychological and social psychological theories that influence work motivation, the authors suggested motivation scholars should consider using concepts developed in fields outside organisational behaviour and industrial/organisational psychology (Locke & Latham, 2004). However, their suggestions were limited to related fields such as organisation theory and strategic management and did not extend to organisational behaviour or management related disciplines such as sociology and economics. This oversight excluded work motivation theories such as temporal motivational (Steel & König, 2006) that draws heavily from economics or a sociologically informed approach such as a meta-theory incorporating theories of self-concept (Leonard, Beauvais, & Scholl, 1999).

Three of the psychological theories presented in Locke's (1997) model emphasise social influences on work motivation: distributive justice (Adams, 1963); social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986); and procedural justice (Greenberg, 1990). This social emphasis suggests that the field of sociology, which attempts to understand and explain the way that individuals and groups interact within a society or a social institution, offers considerable scope to explore the topic of work motivation. Indeed, both psychologists and sociologists clearly recognised the profound influence social factors had on individual behaviour through their mutual founding of the field of social psychology that can only be fully understood from a dual perspective. However, there is a long history of social psychology operating as two distinct fields under the one umbrella (Britt, 1937) and it has been argued that the direction of strongest influence has run from psychology to sociology (Thoits, 1995). In part this phenomenon is because sociologists more often assess the degree to which status

characteristics, social relationships, and structural contexts influence individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours while psychologists more often explicate the mechanisms through which such social factors affect individuals (Thoits, 1995). Nevertheless, a number of authors from the field of sociology have stated the need to develop a theory of motivation that is explicit, parsimonious and sociologically defensible (Gecas, 1991; McMahon, 1984; Turner, 1987). The lack of such a theory of motivation has hampered theory construction, contributed to an "oversocialised view of man" and handicapped the field's assessment of the relationship between institutions and individuals (Gecas, 1991). Given the call for new approaches to push work motivation theory to another level, a sociologically informed theory of motivation should contribute to our knowledge of what motivates people to work.

## Self-efficacy

Within the field of social psychology, one area where there is a clear overlap between sociology and psychology is the topic of self-efficacy (Thoits, 1995). Within psychology, self-efficacy beliefs refer to "people's judgement in one's capabilities to mobilise the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands" and is a critical mechanism within the framework of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Self-efficacy has been identified as a key motivational construct within organisations (Gist & Mitchell, 1992) and is a core component of Locke and Latham's (2004) integrated model of work motivation. Within sociology, the motivational significance of self-efficacy dates back to Marx's view of human nature as a process of self-creation through efficacious action in the context of work (Marx & Bottomore, 1963). Indeed, a key feature of Marx's concept of alienation is powerlessness or a lack of self-efficacy (Gecas, 1991). The twin foci of psychology and sociology on self-efficacy as a construct to explain human behaviour makes self-efficacy a particularly relevant concept for the study of work motivation from a broader perspective. In psychological terms, self-efficacy is conceptualised from an agentic perspective and refers to the motivation to perceive oneself as a causal agent

(Bandura, 1986; Gecas, 1991). As a result, self-efficacy affects goal choice and especially goal difficulty while both goals and self-efficacy affect performance through their effects on direction, effort, persistence and task strategies or tactics (Locke & Latham, 2004).

An agentic perspective is important to both psychology and sociology. From a sociological point of view, voluntaristic action forms a long and rich history that goes to the heart of work motivation theory (Blumer, 1969; Parsons, 1937). Further, self-theory (considered to be synonymous with symbolic interactionism) conceptualises the individual as an actor in their world which provides agentive qualities such as spontaneity and creativity (Gecas, 1989). Symbolic interactionism provides a framework for viewing the self as a reflexive phenomenon with its constituent parts of the 'I' and the 'me' (Mead & Strauss, 1956). As the self-concept develops, the individual is motivated to maintain and enhance three motives associated with the self-concept: self-esteem; self-efficacy; and authenticity (Gecas, 1991). Each of these motives is influenced by socialisation processes such as reflected appraisals, social comparisons, self-attributions, role learning and social identity development (Gecas, 1991).

From a psychological point of view, human agency is a critical facet of how people's motivation is activated and sustained (Bandura & Locke, 2003). In particular, social cognitive theory subscribes to a model of emergent interactive agency where people are neither autonomous agents acting independently of any external factors nor simply mechanical conveyers of animated environmental influences (Bandura, 1989). Within this conceptualisation of agency, the most central and pervasive instrument is people's beliefs in their capabilities to exercise control over events that effect their lives – their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy beliefs are built through the process of triadic reciprocal causation where personal factors, the environment and behaviour continually interact and influence human actions. The psychological process of developing self-efficacy beliefs through personal standards, social referential comparisons and self-reactive influences

(Bandura, 1997) is analogous to the sociological processes of reflected appraisals, social comparisons and self-attributions used in creating the self-concept. Given this overlap between sociological and psychological perspectives of self-efficacy, research into factors influencing self-efficacy beliefs and work motivation will make an important contribution to both fields.

The concept of self-efficacy beliefs and their influence on motivation was in part developed using expectancy-value theory (Vroom & Deci, 1970). This theory states that a given performance depends on particular outcomes and the value that individuals place on these outcomes. A key difference between expectancy-value theory and self-efficacy theory is that self-efficacy distinguishes between successful performance (efficacy expectancy) and successful outcome (outcome expectancy) (Maddux & Gosselin, 2003). As a result, individuals will act on their beliefs about what they are capable of achieving, as well as their beliefs about the likely outcomes of successful performance. In this respect, perceived self-efficacy is a broader construct than effort expectancy (Bandura 2003). It claims that belief in one's self-efficacy is a good predictor of performance whereas the belief in the utility of effort alone is not (Bandura, 1997).

Within self-efficacy theory, three tenets guide an individual's efficacy and outcome expectancies: personal agency and control, confidence in one's competence and effectiveness (Maddux & Gosselin, 2003). These beliefs determine an individual's willingness to sustain effort when undertaking challenging tasks. People who strongly believe in the level of personal agency and control they have over their environment are more likely to be motivated and sustain effort when undertaking challenging tasks than individuals with a weak sense of personal agency and control. People with high levels of confidence in their competence to undertake challenging tasks are more likely to be to be motivated and sustain effort than individuals with low levels of confidence in their competence. Finally, people who believe effort will lead to desired outcomes (effectiveness) are more likely to be motivated and

sustain effort when undertaking challenging tasks than individuals who believe effort will not lead to desired outcomes. These three tenets are described in greater detail below.

### *Personal Agency and Control*

Agency and control are major topics in both the psychology and sociology literature. From a psychological perspective, to be an agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances (Bandura, 1986). In this view, people are self-organising, pro-active, self-regulating, and self-reflecting and are not simply onlookers of their behaviour (Bandura, 2006). Human agency incorporates four core properties: intentionality; forethought; self-reactiveness; and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 1986). These four properties provide individuals with the cognitive frameworks to make choices about their actions. Notwithstanding the distinctively human capabilities these frameworks enable, most human functioning is socially situated and therefore psychological concepts are socially embedded (Bandura, 1977). As a result, human agency is a product of not only intrapersonal determinants but also behavioural influences and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, social systems are created by human activity and in turn, social systems help to organise, guide and regulate human affairs (Bandura, 1986). This socially embedded perspective of agency closely parallels the symbolic inter-actionist tradition within sociology where the individual is primarily an actor in the environment, shaping and creating his/her world as well as being created by it. Clearly, both the psychological and sociological disciplines view agency as a central issue of human functioning.

### *Confidence in Competence*

Another factor influencing an individual's self-efficacy beliefs is the perceived skill or competence they have to perform a required task or function. The notion of competence and personal mastery has been consistently raised as an important part of human functioning (Bandura, 1991; Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2002; Harter, 1978; White, 1959). People who do not believe they have the requisite skill for a given task will be unlikely to

demonstrate persistent and sustained energy on this task as they perceive the likelihood of success to be low. An individual's perception of their competence is governed by their efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1977). Individuals develop beliefs about their own competency through three sources: personal standards, social referential comparators, and self-reactive influences (Bandura, 1991). It is claimed that belief in one's capabilities has no determinative function or is self-debilitating (Vancouver, Thompson, & Williams, 2001). However these claims do not stand up to close scrutiny as control theory's ontological foundations that are used to justify these claims have never been clearly articulated and there are serious empirical issues in the research undertaken to support these claims (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Therefore, confidence in one's competency is an important influence on self-efficacy beliefs.

### *Effectiveness*

An individual's effectiveness is influenced by their perceptions of how the social environment impacts their ability to achieve certain outcomes. To the extent that an individual believes a given action will lead to a successful outcome, they will feel more effective and develop a positive outcome expectation (Bandura, 1991). There has been some criticism about the perceived ambiguousness of the distinction between outcome and efficacy expectations and that the causal relationship starts with people visualising outcomes and then inferring their own capability from these imagined outcomes (Eastman & Marzillier, 1984). However, this perspective suggests outcomes that flow from actions are made to precede the actions and is implausible (Bandura, 1997). From a sociological perspective, the term "system responsiveness" provides an alternative label to outcome expectations (Gecas, 1989). This term has been used to distinguish between self-perceived competence and a system's responsiveness to support people achieving a desired outcome (Almond & Verba, 1989; Barber, 1983). To the extent individuals perceive the social environment enables them to achieve an outcome expectation, the "system" has been responsive.

## Work-Related Performance

Although self-efficacy gained considerable prominence as an area of academic inquiry in the field of work motivation in the late 1980's and 1990's, its application in management practice does not appear to be widespread. To illustrate, anecdotal evidence gleaned from a selection of Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management textbooks shows self-efficacy is not referred to as much as popular work motivational constructs such as goal setting or feedback and coaching. This oversight is surprising as a meta-analysis conducted by Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) found a weighted average correlation between self-efficacy and work-related performance of .38, representing a 28% gain in performance, much greater than the 10% performance increase found for goal setting (Wood & Locke, 1987) or the 14% increase reported for feedback and coaching (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

A key word search of relevant constructs was undertaken to provide a more thorough indication of the extent to which self-efficacy had been disseminated in business management practice. Table 1 documents the results of this search using one primarily academic (questia.com) and two practitioner oriented (HBR.org and Money.cnn.com) websites. Books and journal articles were arbitrarily classified as 'academically' oriented publication channels while magazine and newspaper articles were simply treated as 'practitioner' oriented publication channels. On questia.com, self-confidence had by far the largest number of hits across all publication channels while goal setting, feedback & coaching and self-efficacy all scored similar hits in academic outlets. However, there was a much more dramatic decrease in the number of hits for self-efficacy in practitioner publication channels compared with the decrease for self-confidence, goal setting and feedback & coaching. Similarly, the number of hits for self-efficacy was approximately four times that of employee motivation in academic outlets while the number of hits for employee motivation in practitioner channels was over six times that for self-efficacy. Finally, the key word searches of HBR.org and Money.cnn.com turned up only one hit each for self-efficacy, far less than the number of hits for any of the other constructs.

**Table 1**
***Search Results for Selected Key Words***

| Source | Employee Motivation | Goal Setting | Feedback & Coaching | Self-Efficacy | Self-Confidence | Employee Engagement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Questia.com*** | 955 | 4062 | 4479 | 3074 | 20450 | 469 |
| Books | 420 | 2442 | 2984 | 1843 | 16842 | 37 |
| Journal Articles | 301 | 1088 | 903 | 1194 | 1800 | 110 |
| Magazine Articles | 117 | 422 | 500 | 34 | 898 | 269 |
| Newspaper Articles | 117 | 110 | 92 | 3 | 909 | 53 |
| **HBR.org** | 41 | 121 | 62 | 1 | 15 | 79 |
| Books | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| HBR Articles | 11 | 29 | 19 | 0 | 7 | 13 |
| HBS Cases | 16 | 35 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 15 |
| Other Articles | 4 | 20 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| Other | 9 | 32 | 23 | 1 | 4 | 38 |
| **Money.cnn.com** | 12 | 23 | 73 | 1 | 173 | 5 |

*The word "business" was added on the questia.com search to facilitate comparison with the other sites

Although this lack of exposure may simply be another example of the business world ignoring research from business schools (Bartunek, Rynes, & Daft, 2001; Porter & McKibbin, 1988) self-efficacy's relative obscurity in management practice is still perplexing. One plausible explanation for the slow dissemination of self-efficacy's influence on work-related performance into management oriented publication channels and in turn into management practice is that research in this area has been almost exclusively conducted with student participants doing simulated work tasks in non-work related settings (Saks, 1995a). Although this approach has allowed control over research environments and therefore the manipulation of efficacy beliefs, it is also likely to have limited these results being generalised to actual work environments. A detailed examination of the 186 studies included in a recent meta-analysis by Judge et al (2007) found only four studies involving employees being assessed on actual work-related tasks (Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gist, 1989; Gist, Schwoerer, & Rosen, 1989) while an additional search found another study (Morin & Latham, 2000) where employees were participants (See Table 2).

**Table 2**
***Valid Work-Related Self-Efficacy/Work Performance Studies***

| **Study** | **Setting** | **Tasks** | **Participants** | **Outcome Measures** | **Timing of Measures** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gist et al (1989) | Classroom* | Computer Skills | University Managers | Timed 15 minute Performance Test* | Immediate Post Training* |
| Gist (1989) | Classroom* | Idea Generation | Federal Scientific Agency Managers | Idea Quantity and Divergence* | Immediate Post Training* |
| Frayne & Geringer (2000) | Organisation | Self-Management Skills | Insurance Salespeople | Objective & Subjective Performance | 3, 6, 9, 12 months |
| Morin & Latham (2000) | Organisation | Interpersonal Communication Skills | Supervisors and Engineers | Training reaction & peer assessment* | 1 month* |
| Gibson (2001) | Organisation | Goal Setting | Nurses | Patient Surveys* | 2 weeks* |

*Study limitations that leave self-efficacy/work-related performance issues unresolved.

From a management practice perspective, there are limitations to each of these studies. One study (Frayne & Geringer, 2000) claimed that it was the self-management training process rather than changes in self-efficacy beliefs that led to improved work-related performance. This explanation misrepresents the cognitive processes involved as the change in self-efficacy beliefs contributed to increased work-related performance rather than the self-management training itself. Of the remaining four studies, two (Gibson, 2001; Morin & Latham, 2000) used third party observational outcome measures taken two weeks to one month after the intervention rather than objective performance measures over a longitudinal time frame. The last two studies (Gist, 1989; Gist et al., 1989) were set in classrooms and used artificial performance outcome measures taken immediately after training rather than work-related measures over a longitudinal time horizon. While these five studies provide supporting evidence for a positive relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance, they are based on designs that did not directly measure the relationship between self-efficacy on work-related performance by employees in an organisational setting using objective job performance measures. In addition, only one of these studies had a time frame exceeding 8 weeks. In summary, although many self-efficacy studies have been undertaken in the 'real'

world of work, there is a serious gap in the literature where these studies have involved real employees undertaking real work-related tasks where outcomes are performance measures and this is likely to be contributing to self-efficacy's lack of adoption in management practice.

The above background to work motivation theory and in particular the importance of self-efficacy and agency to both the psychology and sociology disciplines provided the impetus and overall direction for my dissertation. Firstly, I wanted to find out whether or not a self-efficacy based intervention undertaken with employees performing relevant work tasks in a workplace setting would have a similar impact on work-related performance that it had been found to have with participants performing work-related tasks in laboratory settings. In my original PhD application, I indicated that conducting a field experiment was an ideal methodological approach to investigate the relationship between employee motivation and performance in Australia. Studying the influence of a self-efficacy based intervention on the work-related performance of employees in a work setting clearly fit this stated approach and would address the identified gap in the literature. Second, I wanted to investigate the emerging concept of employee engagement which in sharp contrast to self-efficacy was being extensively written about in practitioner publication channels and widely measured by organisations. Employee engagement has commonly been described as employees putting forth "discretionary effort" (Towers Perrin, 2003). Although at that stage I did not have a clear theoretical justification or empirical evidence to suggest work motivation generally or self-efficacy are specifically and directly related to employee engagement, prima facie the concept of discretionary effort suggests there was a strong link between self-efficacy and employee engagement. Thirdly, as a former manager, the notion that human behaviour could be explained by social psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and agency resonated deeply and appealed to my intuition as a meaningful avenue of intellectual pursuit that potentially had significant practical applications. Therefore, I believed strongly that studying

social cognitive theory with a particular focus on self-efficacy and employee engagement was the right focus for my dissertation.

## Self-Efficacy Intervention

In order to undertake a controlled field experiment on self-efficacy's influence on work motivation and behaviour that met the criteria for a PhD dissertation, I needed to find an appropriate self-efficacy based intervention. Self-efficacy based interventions rely on four categories of experience: (1) enactive mastery (or repeated performance success); (2) modelling (or vicarious experience); (3) verbal persuasion (or realistic encouragement of performance); and (4) judgments of physiological states (Parker, 1998). Therefore in order to maximise the likelihood that task self-efficacy increases and in turn raises work-related performance, at least one and preferably a combination of these category of experiences needs to be part of the intervention.

Of the four categories of experiences, enactive mastery is considered to be the most important factor deciding a person's self-efficacy as success raises self-efficacy while failure lowers it (Bandura, 1997). Modelling, the process of comparing oneself with someone else is the second most influential factor in enhancing an individual's self-efficacy. When people see someone succeeding at something, their self-efficacy will increase; where they see people failing, their self-efficacy will decrease. Modelling interventions can be based on either social comparison modelling, multiple source modelling; peer modelling; or vicarious modelling. Research has shown that for the effects of social comparison modelling to be optimised, a person should see him- or herself as similar to his or her own model. Therefore it is important to give employees the opportunity to watch colleagues perform tasks successfully. Research has also shown that multiple sources of information are more effective than a single source in changing perceptions of self-efficacy and corresponding performance (Bandura, 1997). In addition, research on peer modelling has found that learners exhibit greater attention, retention, production (enactment of behaviours) and motivation when peers act as models.

The last form modelling (vicarious or self-modelling) is a significant method of modelling skill acquisition and in raising perceptions of self-efficacy. The third category of experience designed to raise self-efficacy is verbal or social persuasion through active encouragement or discouragement. This form of self-efficacy experience can have a strong influence as most people remember times where something said to them significantly altered their confidence. Finally, an individual's physiological or psychological state can have either a positive or negative influence on enhancing self-efficacy. Overall these four forms of modelling provide significant scope for organisations to boost employee task self-efficacy. In summary, the ideal self-efficacy intervention would give employees the opportunity for enactive mastery, provide numerous forms of modelling experience, encourage employees to perform at realistic levels and provide a safe physiological environment.

Bearing these four categories of experience in mind, I began my search for a self-efficacy based intervention in mid-2006. Coincidentally I was asked by a retail liquor division (Division W) of an Australian retailer to lead a three hour session focusing on customer service at their annual conference. Division W had launched a series of customer service initiatives at previous conferences but had found that once the fanfare was over, there was no tangible evidence that there had been an improvement in customer service. The issue of customer service was becoming an increasingly strategic issue for Division W because the market was becoming increasingly competitive, particularly with the growth of two 'category killer' brands. Therefore, Division W's brand image and value proposition needed to become customer service centric in order to carve out a sustainable competitive position.

Approximately 150 managers (50 from the support office and 100 store managers out of a network of 600 stores) were scheduled to attend the 2006 conference but there were two distinct differences compared to previous ones. First, Division W had commissioned a market research company to conduct mystery shopping for the first time in the organisation's history and management wanted to release the findings including comparisons with its key

competitor at the conference. A range of studies have found mystery shoppers provide reliable ratings of the performance of retail outlets (Finn & Kayande, 1999). Second, Division W intended to build a complete prototype (including drive thru lanes) of their latest store design within their division's dedicated exhibition hall at the conference. The space available allowed tiered seating to be installed opposite the drive thru that effectively turned the prototype into a theatre stage. These two changes provided the impetus needed to approach tackling the customer service issue differently. Mystery shopping typically generates objective and quantitative data only but the company conducting the research agreed to collect anecdotal evidence in the form of actual stories of bad customer service from their mystery shoppers at stores who had scored poorly. These stories provided the insights needed to be turned into mini-case studies designed to illustrate the human interactions between staff and customers that were actually driving the quantitative results. In order to present the case studies in the most dynamic and impactful way possible, a learning company (Company B) that specialised in using actors at conferences and for training interventions was contacted for suggestions on how best to present the mini-case studies to the audience. During the briefing, Company B recommended an organisation theatre technique called "Forum Theatre" as being ideally suited to showcase the mini case studies as a series of sketch comedy 'vignettes' designed to engage and motivate the audience into action. The three hour session was therefore based around these four mini-case studies with plenty of audience participation and discussion. The case studies were then followed by the formal presentation of the mystery shopping results, an action planning session and an awards ceremony for stores who had performed well in the mystery shopping surveys.

When the event was over, I was overwhelmed by the extremely positive reaction of the audience and senior management to the three hour session. Not only was the feedback exceptional but I felt a palpable shift in the audience's mood and sense of conviction to address customer service issues at Division W. As an experienced facilitator and consultant,

the event was unlike anything else with which I had previously been involved. As I reflected on the event, my epiphany was that Forum Theatre acted as a catalytic process that stimulated participant's sense of their own agency while simultaneously providing all four categories of experience (enactive mastery, modelling/vicarious learning, social persuasion and physiological state) for participants to measure their own self-efficacy beliefs against. Two months later, I had a de-briefing meeting with Division W and heard anecdotal evidence that the conference session had continued to impact conference attendees long after they had returned back to work. For example, one senior manager commented that when he arrived for a visit to a store in a remote regional Australian city, the store manager referred to the Forum Theatre scenes at the conference and proceeded to show the senior manager the activities he had undertaken to improve customer service at his store since the conference. Not only had the store manager been proactive in initiating change, his persona had become much more animated which was out of character with his normal reserved manner. Clearly there was quite a strong, positive and lingering effect on his motivation and behaviour.

In summary, Forum Theatre appeared to offer the self-efficacy based intervention I needed to conduct a controlled field experiment as part of my dissertation. Although other, established forms of self-efficacy intervention such as self-management, self-talk or behavioural modelling could also have been used, discussions with Company B and my supervisors concluded that the novel approach provided by the use of organisational theatre had the potential to make a major theoretical contribution. While the other techniques arguably embodied the four sources of self-efficacy information required to enhance self-efficacy and boost performance, Forum Theatre appeared to boost participant's sense of their personal agency and control, key facets of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, Forum Theatre offered a unique means to act as a catalyst for participants to change while concurrently providing the four sources of self-efficacy information. In addition, as shall be explained in more detail later, the initial use of Forum Theatre enabled

complimentary organisational theatre techniques such as Rehearse for Reality and Education Entertainment to be incorporated as part of the self-efficacy boosting process. Rehearse for Reality extended the intervention to incorporate an affective as well as a cognitive approach to self-efficacy enhancement while Education Entertainment provided a resilience building, behavioural reinforcement tool. As the primary objective of the thesis was to maximise self-efficacy enhancement in order to assess its impact on work-related performance, the combination of all three organisational theatre techniques provided a superior intervention to traditional self-efficacy boosting forms. Therefore, the decision was to build the intervention around Forum Theatre and the other organisational theatre techniques.

## Literature Review Chapter

The literature review contains three sections: First it provides an overview of social cognitive theory and its key mechanism of self-efficacy that has been highlighted in the introduction as a crucial underexplored concept in management practice associated with work motivation. Second, it outlines the popular management topic of employee engagement and links it to the earlier and related concept of job burnout as well as to self-efficacy. Third, it explores the emerging use of organisation theatre as an intervention tool in organisation change and explains its use as an affective-cognitive behavioural therapy technique designed to increase self-efficacy. Linking social cognitive theory and self-efficacy with job burnout and employee engagement provides a bridge to popular management practice. Demonstrating the connection between organisation theatre and social cognitive theory shows that interventions focused on raising self-efficacy beliefs lend themself to measuring their impact on work motivation, employee engagement and performance.

## Methodology Chapter

Although not for the fainthearted, undertaking a field experiment with employees inside an organisation was the ideal way in which to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy, employee engagement and performance. Besides the usual travails associated with

conducting action research studies within organisations, the proposed field experiment faced two major obstacles. First, a suitable host organisation needed to be recruited that was committed to the research objectives and was willing to allow employees to participate. Second, using a theatre based intervention to promote stronger self-efficacy beliefs required professional actors who needed to be paid for their services. Assuming these two hurdles were overcome, the next key issue would be to find a challenging task where low levels of employee beliefs in their self-efficacy were inhibiting behaviour and undermining performance. Related to this step was determining which employee level (front-line, supervisor, manager, executive) should be the focus of the field experiment. Finally, a balance needed to be struck between having a sufficient number of participants in the field experiment to be able to conduct suitable statistical analysis while also being able to stick within budget parameters. The methodology chapter outlines the process that was used to recruit host organisations, access funding sources and identify behavioural change and performance improvement opportunities.

## Thesis by Publication

Macquarie University has adopted a preferred approach for doctoral candidates to submit their dissertations based on the 'thesis by publication' format. Over the past decade or so, this approach has emerged as a legitimate alternative to the traditional 'Big Book' thesis that is an artefact of the British university system. Numerous Australian and Canadian universities who were originally bound by the British system have formally adopted the thesis by publication approach as an alternative. Even some American universities, who have a much smaller emphasis on the dissertation portion of a PhD candidate's degree, have adopted the thesis by publication approach. A sample of universities adopting this alternative is listed below:

<u>Australia</u>

University of Western Australia, Monash University, Queensland University of Technology, Macquarie University, University of Tasmania, University of Canberra

Canada

McGill University, University of Manitoba, University of British Columbia, University of Guelph, Concordia University

United States

University of Texas, Virginia Tech, Montana State University, University of Rhode Island

The reasons behind universities adopting this alternative are explicitly summarised on Macquarie University's own website: "A thesis prepared in journal article format adds value to the research student experience, encourages timely completion, enhances job prospects and improves the publications outputs and research ranking of the University." Therefore, Macquarie University's adoption of this model accords with leading Australian and Canadian universities in particular. Set out below are edited excerpts (key sentences in **bold**) from the guidelines on Macquarie University's HDR website:

"A thesis prepared in journal article format adds value to the research student experience, encourages timely completion, enhances job prospects and improves the publications outputs and research ranking of the University. A thesis by publication may include **relevant papers, including conference presentations, which have been published, accepted, submitted or prepared for publication** for which the research has been undertaken during enrolment. The papers should form a coherent and integrated body of work, which should be focused on a single thesis project or set of related questions or propositions. **These papers are one part of the thesis, rather than a separate component** (or appendix)."

"These papers may be single author or co-authored. The candidate must specify his/her specific contribution. Where a paper has multiple authors, the candidate would usually be the principal author and acknowledgement of this should be referenced in the appropriate manner

for the discipline. **Examiners can then assess if the quality and extent of the candidate's contribution warrants the award of the degree based on the specified criteria.**"

"Most theses by publication have between 2 and 8 papers in combinations of sole and co-authored papers. The candidate needs to **include a critical introduction to the work, sections that link the papers together, and a concluding section that synthesises the material as a whole**. **Above all, candidates must consider the coherence of the thesis as a whole, and the way in which each paper contributes to the overall thesis**. Although a thesis by publication may contain some repetition, it is expected that the repetition be minimal so as to facilitate the examination process. Candidates should ensure that any referencing and stylistic inconsistencies between papers are minimized to assist the examiners."

These guidelines provide crystal clear instructions to PhD candidates, supervisors and examiners on the criteria associated with successful submission of a dissertation using the thesis by publication format and were highly influential in my decision to choose this format for my own dissertation.

## Overview of Journal Articles

The decision to undertake my PhD using the 'research thesis by publication' method was made half way through my candidature once the intervention phase of the field experiment and initial data collection and analysis was complete. At this point in time, three distinct themes were emerging from the data. First, anecdotal evidence and preliminary data analysis suggested self-efficacy had increased for employees who had been through the intervention and that there was a positive an impact on behaviour and performance as a result. Therefore, writing one article with a primary focus on the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance where employees were undertaking real work tasks would be a highly appropriate way to address the absence of a field study experiment in this area. Second, the host organisation was particularly interested in employee engagement which mirrored wider business community interest and gradually increasing academic interest in this construct. Therefore, writing a second article focusing on whether or not a self-efficacy-based

intervention had a positive influence on employee engagement was highly relevant. Third, the review of the organisation theatre literature revealed both a dearth of quantitative reviews of theatre-based interventions and conflicting viewpoints on their purpose and effect. Therefore, writing a third article on organisation theatre as an intervention form with the aim of better understanding its application and utility in corporate environments would be a significant contribution to empirical research in this field. As a result, it was decided that writing three articles with unique and distinctive themes was the most appropriate manner to organise the thesis and disseminate its findings.

## Conclusion

As hypothesised, there was a positive relationship between employees' self-efficacy and their work-related performance on work tasks undertaken in real time. Indeed, the mean correlation between self-efficacy and work-related performance was almost identical to that found with student populations undertaking simulations under laboratory conditions. Although employee engagement was found to be strongly correlated with self-efficacy, regression analysis showed that employee engagement independently explained additional variance in performance when both past performance and self-efficacy were taken into account. This suggests that implementing and measuring both self-efficacy and employee engagement on a regular basis is desirable for organisations seeking to increase their employees work-related performance. The study also documented the degree to which the organisation theatre intervention had a positive and significant influence on self-efficacy, engagement and performance. T-tests and generalised linear modelling demonstrated that employees who participated in the intervention were more self-efficacious on the key task that was the focus of the intervention, more absorbed in their roles and achieved better outcomes than employees in the control group. Again, this suggests that self-efficacy based organisation theatre interventions are appropriate vehicles for organisations seeking to increase employee engagement and performance.

As we shall see, there has been considerable debate about the purpose and effect of using organisation theatre interventions as a vehicle for organisational change. The third paper explored the effect of an organisation theatre intervention on both narrower and broader dimensions of employee's sense of self-efficacy, self-esteem and personal control that are key factors in both 'motivational' and even 'relational' approaches to empowerment. Concurrently, it investigated organisation theatre's effects on narrower and broader forms of 'soft' control such as personal control through emotional labour. The findings support that it is possible to have both increased empowerment *and* control and questions the stronger suggestions made by supporters and critics for the existence of major significant developments in either empowerment or soft control as a result of an OT intervention.

Overall, the field experiment was successful at highlighting the role that self-efficacy plays in human behaviour at work. The interaction between internal (psychological) and external (sociological) factors had a significant impact. The integrative conclusion section will provide more detail about the intervention's results as well as discuss implications for management practice and make recommendations for future research.

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# Literature Review

This literature review covers three main topics: Social Cognitive Theory (including self-efficacy); Employee Engagement and Job Burnout; and Organisation Theatre. The purpose of the literature review is to explore the background to and key issues in each field, demonstrate the linkages between them that led to developing hypotheses to be tested in the field experiment and provide an integrated view of their interrelationships. The first section overviews social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) "the theory heard 'round the world" (Smith, 2002, p. 30) that was initially conceived in the 1970's as social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Smith's catchy phrase highlights the influence social cognitive theory and its core mechanism of self-efficacy have had on millions of people in the developing world through the vehicle of 'entertainment-education' (Singhal, 2004). The second section begins by outlining the theoretical development and practice of employee engagement. The concept of employee engagement has been developed by both practitioners and academics and is a prime example of the dictum "there is nothing more practical than a good theory" (Lewin, 1945, p. 129). The rest of the second section sets out the background to and development of the construct of job burnout (Maslach, 2001). Although job burnout was originally identified as a symptom of occupational stress for human service workers in the late 1970's, both its theoretical underpinnings and empirical evidence studies are prime examples of the role self-efficacy beliefs play in determining behaviour. Finally, the last section explores the topic of organisation theatre (OT). This field offers considerable scope as a vehicle for promoting human agency, building self-efficacy beliefs and challenging organisational power hierarchies and relationships.

## Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory is rooted in an agentic perspective of human behaviour where people are seen to be proactive regulators of their own motivations and actions through anticipative, purposeful and self-evaluating mechanisms (Bandura, 2006). Within social

cognitive theory, human agency, the extent to which people chose to exercise influence over what they do, functions within the conceptual model of triadic reciprocal causation where the dynamic interaction between action (behaviour), internal factors such as cognition, affect and other personal factors (person) and environmental events (external) determinant the actions individuals undertake (Bandura, 1989). Human agency can therefore be conceptualised as an emergent interactive phenomenon that is determined by both internal, self-generated influences and external factors in contrast to alternative approaches that view human agency as an autonomous or mechanical function (Bandura, 1989). Social cognitive theory specifies four features of human agency that contribute to people being active contributors to their life circumstances: intentionality (future directed action plans and strategies to realise them); forethought (visualised goals and anticipated outcomes); self-reactiveness (motivation and regulation of the execution of courses of action); and self-reflectiveness (examining one's thoughts and actions) (Bandura, 2006). In summary, the notion of human agency is a critical facet of how people's motivation is activated and sustained.

In addition to the importance of human agency, the notion that self-efficacy beliefs regulate human behaviour lies at the heart of social cognitive theory. In effect, when an individual believes they have the skills, knowledge and ability to perform a task, they will be motivated to do so; conversely, when an individual is unsure of their capabilities to undertake an activity and reach a goal, their motivation suffers (Bandura, 1991). Beliefs of personal efficacy constitute a critical factor of human agency as these beliefs provide explicit guidelines on how people chose to exercise their agency (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, the belief in one's self-efficacy is an important proximal determinant of how people self-regulate their behaviour. Crucially, people who believe they are highly efficacious tend to attribute failure to insufficient effort whilst those who believe they are inefficacious tend to ascribe failure to their own low ability (Bandura, 1991). Further, people with higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs set higher goals for themselves and are more committed to achieving them

while conversely individuals with lower levels of self-efficacy are more easily discouraged by obstacles or failures (Bandura, 1991). Perceived self-efficacy also affects the value people place on activities as they remain more interested in those activities in which they judge themselves to be highly self-efficacious. Indeed, perceived self-efficacy is a better predictor of the level of intrinsic interest in an activity than actual ability (Bandura, 1991).

Self-efficacy beliefs affect people's behaviour in a number of ways including: their psychological well-being and performance; the level of motivation they feel; how much effort and for how long people persevere on a task; the amount of stress and depression they experience in threatening or taxing situations; and types of thought patterns that may be self-aiding or self-hindering (Wood & Bandura, 1989). These beliefs can be instilled and strengthened in four principal ways: enactive mastery experiences where success at performance in overcoming obstacles is typically obtained through sustained effort; modelling where people learn through a social comparison process; social persuasion where individuals receiving realistic encouragement are likely to exert greater effort; and physiological and psychological states where people enhance their physical status and reduce their stress levels (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Therefore, the strength of self-efficacy beliefs are the product of a process of self-persuasion that relies on diverse sources of efficacy information that must be selected, weighted, and integrated. As a result, people with firmly established self-efficacy beliefs are resilient to adversity whereas individuals with weakly held beliefs are highly vulnerable to doubting their capabilities (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

In contrast to control theories that typically use negative feedback and discrepancy reduction as the catalyst for individual motivation, social cognitive theory uses the property of 'forethought' in the form of visualised goals and anticipated outcomes as a key determinant of future action. This aspect of social cognitive theory is closely aligned with goal setting theory where there is substantial evidence that explicit, challenging goals enhance and sustain motivation (Locke & Latham, 1990). Goal setting relies on people being motivated to reduce

negative discrepancies that occur through either (1) negative feedback (where their internal standard for performance is greater than their actual performance); or (2) high standards of performance have been set and they strive to exceed them even if this process creates considerable angst and stress (Bandura & Locke, 2003). However, individual motivation does not spring from the setting of goals themselves but because goals set the conditions for people to achieve positive self-evaluations (Bandura, 1991). Further, goal setting without feedback on how one is doing against the goal does not stimulate motivation as it is the combined influence of goal setting with performance feedback that heightens motivation (Bandura, 1991).

Goals operate largely through self-referent processes as individuals are motivated and guided by both the foresight of goals and the hindsight of shortfalls rather than by having motivation and action regulated directly (Bandura, 1989). In effect, human motivation relies on both discrepancy *production* (setting of challenging goals) and discrepancy *reduction* (only acting when the internal standard is greater than performance). To illustrate this point, research on self-reactive influences found that motivation was raised for people adopting goals before they received comparative feedback (Bandura & Cervone, 1986). These findings suggest that the primary system for motivation activation relies on proactive control on the part of the individual while reactive feedback provides information on how much adjustment in effort is required to achieve desired goals. Self-motivation is therefore a two-step or dual control process where the first step is to produce disequilibrium by setting a goal and the second step is to reduce the disequilibrium through effort towards achieving the goal. Proof that self-motivation is a dual control process is particularly significant because it demonstrates the benefits of positive visualisation, feedback and reinforcement and debunks the perceived power of negative feedback as a motivating force (Bandura & Locke, 2003).

Although goal systems are typically categorised as having proximal goals that serve as sub-goals for a broader, more distal super ordinate goal, this conceptualisation is incorrect

(Bandura, 1991). Motivation is activated by regular feedback regarding the progress towards and achievement of sub-goals. This feedback provides a continuing source of interest and self-motivation that often outweighs the lure of a super ordinate goal (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). In effect, an individual's reward comes from the ongoing process of self-mastery rather than the achievement of the end goal itself. The key implication of this principle is that motivation can be best sustained through a combination of valued distal aspirations with regular feedback on proximal sub-goals that help to inform self-guidance.

In contrast to personality theories which emphasise achievement needs or motives and where the underlying motive is in effect inferred from someone's behaviour, social cognitive theory postulates that it is the anticipation of self-incentives that stimulates motivation (Bandura, 1991). Indeed, when the level of self-set goals is controlled for, there is no relationship between an individual's need for achievement and performance (Latham & Marshall, 1982). A key advantage of the cognitive goal setting framework over the need for achievement dispositional one is that goal theory can readily explain rapid changes in motivation (Bandura, 1991). Another advantage of social cognitive theory is the parsimonious way it explains the impact of extrinsic feedback and incentives on motivation and performance. It acknowledges the prospect that people are motivated by valued extrinsic outcomes but demonstrates that people also please themselves through the fulfilment of sub-goal challenges (Bandura, 1991).

Although social cognitive theory has certain similarities with expectancy-valence theory (Vroom & Deci, 1970) there is one key difference. According to expectancy-valence theory, performance is jointly influenced by outcome expectancies (the expectancy that behaving in a particular way will lead to a given outcome) and the desirability of that outcome (Bandura, 1997). Instead, social cognitive theory posits that activated motivation starts with one's 'efficacy beliefs' – the strength, level and generality that one can organise and execute given types of performances prior to consideration of the likely consequence such

performances will produce (Bandura, 1997). In effect, individuals act on their beliefs about what they are capable of achieving, as well as their beliefs about the likely outcomes of performance. Therefore, perceived self-efficacy is a broader construct than expectancy-valence and as a result, belief in one's self-efficacy is a good predictor of performance whereas the belief in the utility of effort alone is not (Bandura & Locke, 2003).

The structure of social cognitive theory is built around three factors: personal standards; social referential comparisons; and self-reactive influences. Personal standards, are developed in three ways (Bandura, 1991). First, people form standards on the basis of how significant persons in their lives react to their behaviour. Second, personal standards can be taught and are most effective when based on shared values and mutual support. Finally, standards can be drawn from the evaluative reactions of other's towards one's behaviour. Importantly, people do not act as passive receptors of social models but rather construct their own personal standards based on a reflective process of direct, observed and vicarious influences (Bandura, 1991).

Because most activities do not have absolute standards to measure ones' self against, social referential comparisons are used by people to appraise and judge their performance. These comparisons are made by reference to one of up to three primary information sources: the attained performance level; one's personal standards; or the performance of others (Bandura, 1991). In addition, the value people place on a given activity will influence their performance judgment - non-valued activities are unlikely to have significant impact while highly valued activities will have a material influence on people's judgment (Bandura, 1991). Further, the more people attribute their performance to their own abilities and efforts compared to external factors, the greater their self-regulatory impact will be on their performance judgment. Finally, the third factor, self-reactive influences, states that the way in which people react to their judgement of their own performance determines the actions they subsequently pursue. In effect, self-reactions provide the mechanism by which personal

standards regulate courses of action (Bandura, 1991). These three factors (personal standards, social referential comparisons; and self-reactive influences) provide the necessary information for people to make judgments on their own attainments and determine future actions.

People also use self-incentives (both material and self-evaluative) to self-regulate their behaviour and improve the likelihood of achieving desired performance (Bandura, 1991). Self-evaluative incentives are a particularly powerful way for people to sustain motivation as both the anticipated satisfaction from achieving a desired accomplishment and the anticipated dissatisfaction from not achieving it act as strong incentives (Bandura, 1991). Self-reactive influences can also mediate cognitive motivation on goal intentions in three ways. Firstly, people will intensify their effort to achieve a goal if it is of value to them because achieving a valued standard adds an affective component. Secondly, an individual's perceived self-efficacy can positively or negatively impact cognitive motivation. Finally, people can readjust their internal standards in light of the progress being made towards attaining one's goals. Each of these three factors of self-influence have a significant, independent impact on motivation but can have an even more powerful cumulative effect when used in combination (Bandura, 1991).

An integral part of social cognitive theory is determining whether people believe ability is an acquirable skill or an inherent capacity. There is clear evidence that people who believe skills are acquirable have a higher sense of personal efficacy and as a result, achieve high organisational attainments (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Another factor influencing performance is the extent to which individuals believe they can influence or control their environment (Bandura, 1991). People with high levels of personal efficacy to make change happen will persevere in figuring out ways of exerting some control over their environment no matter how challenging it is whereas individuals with low levels of personal efficacy will not make change happen even if the environment is conducive to change (Bandura, 1986). Over time, an individual's self-efficacy beliefs about the potential to control their

environment will be influenced by the success or failure they experience. Self-regulatory processes can also produce emotional effects that can undermine performance motivation and psychological well-being (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, people who judge that they lack the efficacy to achieve goals and who abandon difficult goals as being unrealistic can become despondent because they continue to demand goal attainment in order to attain any sense of satisfaction or success. Conversely, people who believe they have the efficacy to fulfil difficult goals will continue to strive for them without becoming despondent when failure occurs.

## Social Cognitive Theory in Organisations

The application of social cognitive theory to organisations is significantly more complex than when applied to individuals due to the wide range of environmental factors that influence organisational dynamics and performance. Motivation and performance in a group environment is influenced by the same process of triadic reciprocal causation that applies to individual motivation and performance. However, there are subtle changes to each of the elements (personal, behavioural and environmental) that influence individual motivation that reflect the group context of organisational life. For example, behaviour will be influenced by managerial choices while the environment will be influenced by management responsiveness (Bandura, 1986). In addition, managers are subjected to a range of affective factors that can undermine self-evaluation and impair decision making processes (Bandura, 1991). As a result, goal setting in a group environment does not show the improvement in performance that the setting of goals does for individuals.

To complicate matters further, the effectiveness of decision making and motivation is reduced by the typically distal nature of group goal setting in contrast to the proximal nature of individual goal setting where the use of sub-goals is proven to be very effective (Bandura, 1991). Social comparison is another factor influencing motivation and the achievement of collective goals (Bandura & Jourden, 1991). For example, to the extent that similar social

referents surpass them, an individual's personal self-efficacy, the quality of their analytic thinking, and their contentment are all adversely impacted. Conversely, progressive enhancement of personal mastery has the reverse effect and therefore a positive impact on personal self-efficacy. Therefore, social comparison can have both detrimental and beneficial effects (Bandura, 1991). By fostering the ability to see aptitude as an acquirable skill and the environment as a controllable factor and by placing greater weight on self-comparative standards and personal improvement, individual motivation will be enhanced.

## Self-Efficacy

Note: This section primarily draws from Bandura's book "Self-efficacy: the exercise of control" published in 1997. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, this book serves as the primary reference source.

Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments. An earlier section highlighted its role in human agency as well as the four sources of self-efficacy information. This section addresses the origins of self-efficacy, its' nature and structure and factors that are of particular importance to developing and sustaining self-efficacy beliefs in organisational environments.

Self-efficacy is a socially constructed concept: newly born infants arrive without a sense of self and thus the self must be socially constructed through interactions with the environment. The development of an infant's self-efficacy progresses through three stages: firstly through perceiving causal relations between events; secondly through understanding causation through action; and thirdly through recognising oneself as the agent of the action. Social cognitive theory encompasses a wider set of developmental influences than do theories that assume that a sense of personal agency develops solely out of one's actions (Flammer, 1995; Gecas, 1989; Piaget, 1952). The observational learning that actions produce effects

plays a leading role in the initial development of a sense of action causation. In developing a conception of personal agency, infants gain self-recognition and learn that they can make things happen. However, the development of a sense of personal efficacy requires more than simply producing effects through one's actions - these actions must also be perceived as being part of oneself and that the self is the agent of these actions. This additional understanding shifts the perception of agency from action causality to personal causality. Further, the differentiation of oneself from others is the product of a more general process of the construction of the self. Based on their growing personal and social experiences, individuals eventually form a symbolic representation of themselves as a distinct self, capable of making things happen. Knowing that one can make things happen is different from experiencing sadness, happiness, pride, or distress over what one has done. The former is a judgment of personal agency whereas the latter is an affective self-reaction. However, having an affective self-reaction presupposes two things: first, one must recognise one's own personal agency; and second, one must have adopted a standard for evaluating one's conduct. Therefore feeling good or bad about one's performance is not a measure of perceived capability but an affective self-reaction to that performance based on the standard one has adopted to judge that performance.

### *Self-efficacy and Training*

The development of a sense of personal agency and self-efficacy beliefs early in life are critical influences on one's ability to perform the range of challenging tasks that many jobs and occupations require in order to achieve desired outcomes. Therefore organisations need to ensure employees have both a well-developed sense of personal agency and appropriate levels of self-efficacy beliefs in the myriad of tasks encompassed by their job roles if they are to successfully execute their duties. However, training programs employed by many organisations do not explicitly focus on engendering a sense of personal agency or a belief in one's self-efficacy as a core objective. Indeed, billions are spent annually on

occupational training, but there is a paucity of reliable evidence about the effectiveness of the methods used (Bandura, 1997, p. 440). Further, most training programs do not even pretend to subject their effectiveness to empirical verification and instead rely on the ubiquitous feedback form (colloquially referred to as the 'happy sheet'). This omission is curious as a regular complaint of many practitioners is the lack of evidence to suggest training programs have worked or have been effective from a cost/benefit perspective. In contrast, the success of training methods founded on social cognitive theory principles are regularly evaluated by empirical tests rather than simply subjective claims. Therefore, the use of social cognitive theory based training principles and evaluation methods are long overdue in the organisational training arena.

Cultivating the agentic capabilities of employees is a key challenge for organisations wanting to achieve higher levels of performance. Social cognitive theory provides a framework for stimulating human agency as people who develop their competencies, self-regulatory skills and enabling beliefs in their efficacy can generate a wider array of options that expand their freedom of action and help them be more successful at realising desired futures than those with less developed agentic resources (Bandura, 2006). In particular, the belief that one has the power to effect changes by one's actions (i.e. one's personal efficacy) is the foundation of human agency (Bandura, 2006). As belief in one's efficacy is a key resource in personal development and change, organisations must strive to enhance this belief by applying the principle of triadic reciprocal causation in the training and development of employees. Organisations are in a unique position to support their employees' personal efficacy development because of the influence they have over the environment their people work in, one of the three triadic reciprocity factors. As social entities with ongoing relationships with their employees, organisations have both the opportunity and the obligation to help their employees develop their personal efficacy. This is particular important given the

wide range of evidence that efficacy beliefs contribute significantly to motivation, emotional well-being and performance accomplishments (Bandura, 2006).

The growth of the global economy and corresponding growth in the number, size and influence of organisations in society, particularly in large developing economies such as China, India, Brazil and Russia which together represent approximately 40% of the world's population and 15% of global GDP (Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation, 2010), underscores the potential for organisations to influence personal efficacy beliefs has never been greater. The most influential source of personal efficacy information are enactive mastery experiences because "they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed" (Bandura, 1997, p. 80). Compared with other approaches to strengthening efficacy beliefs such as vicarious learning through modelling (cognitive simulations of successful performances or tutorial instructions) enactive mastery produces stronger and more generalised efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). However, the effective development of personal efficacy beliefs through enactive mastery experiences, particularly for complex tasks, requires breaking down requisite skills into easily mastered sub-skills. These sub-skills then form the basic building blocks through which an individual's cognitive, behavioural and self-regulatory processes facilitate the acquisition of 'generative' skills – those skills that have the power to produce or originate new skills that enable individuals to perform complex tasks.

Unfortunately much of the training in organisations relies on providing employees with fixed rather than generative skills. This approach specifies the optimal ways of performing an activity, with little or no allowance for variation (Bandura, 1997). As a result, employees do not have the necessary generative skills that are essential for adaptability and innovativeness. By focusing on developing sub-skills rather than specifying 'best' way approaches to performing a task, employees acquire generative skills that enable them to flexibly orchestrate their behaviour to fit the demands of particular situations. Therefore,

incorporating enactive mastery experiences using these principles is a very effective means of employee skill development.

Mastery modelling is another effective tool for promoting a stronger sense of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997). This approach works because humans have evolved an advanced capacity for observational learning that enables them to expand their knowledge and skills on the basis of information conveyed by modelling influences without having to learn the task directly through enactive mastery. In fact a great deal of information about what humans value, our thinking patterns, and behaviours is gained from models that are portrayed symbolically (Bandura, 1997). Three main approaches have been identified to facilitate generative skill transfer in occupational roles via mastery modelling: instructive modelling; guided skill perfection; and transfer training by self-directed success (Bandura, 1997). Instructive modelling occurs when the appropriate occupational skills are modelled to convey the basic rules and strategies to learners. Guided skill perfection involves learners receiving guided practice under simulated conditions so they can perfect the skills before using them in real world situations. Finally, transfer training by self-directed success requires learners to apply their newly learned skills in work situations in ways that will bring them success. By using these three forms of mastery modelling, learners acquire the power to produce and/or originate new generative skills that will enhance their performance.

### *Self-Efficacy in Occupational Socialisation*

A crucial step in employees learning the skills they need to be successful in their roles occurs during their initial induction and training program. Newcomers who come with a secure sense of efficacy learn more and perform better during the period of training than do their low self-efficacy counterparts (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, tailoring training strategies to the level of employees' perceived efficacy beliefs facilitates acquisition of occupational competencies. For example, individuals low in perceived efficacy beliefs are more responsive to prescriptive training techniques whereas employees high in perceived efficacy are more

responsive to training that enables them to perform their occupational roles in more innovative ways. Therefore, employees who are low in perceived efficacy beliefs need greater levels of enactive mastery and vicarious learning experiences than employees who are high in perceived efficacy beliefs to enable them to do more than simply discharge their regular duties. A clear and positive relationship has been found between efficacy beliefs and socialisation (Saks, 1995a) but transfer of training has been found to be lacking (Saks, 1997). Because of the self-construction of jobs, successful occupational functioning is a dynamic process rather than simply plugging personal attributes into specified job requirements (Bandura, 1997).

### *Self-efficacy and work-related performance*

There is a great deal of evidence regarding the importance of self-efficacy for performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1997). The importance of the concept of self-efficacy is such that, in recent times, it has been identified as a core component of several higher-order motivational concepts, including empowerment (Spreitzer, 1996), core confidence (Stajkovic, 2006) and positive psychological capital (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). These higher-order motivational states are proposed to be important in generating outcomes such as performance, subjective well-being, and job satisfaction. In particular, psychological capital (PsyCap) which has been defined as "an individual's positive psychological state of development characterised by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success (Luthans et al., 2007) provides a direct link between self-efficacy, engagement and performance at work. For example, employees high in PsyCap are characterised by their tenacity and persistence and driven by their belief in future success (Sweetman & Luthans,

2010), core elements of self-efficacy, a key element of employee engagement. Further, engaged employees are highly self-efficacious and believe they are able to meet the demands they face in a broad array of contexts (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). Finally, the number of studies showing a positive relationship between employee engagement and job performance is increasing (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010) while a recent meta-analysis found personal resources such as self-efficacy are strongly related to engagement (Halbesleben, 2010a) . Overall self-efficacy has clearly been shown to have a strong and positive relationship with work-related performance and employee engagement, the subject of the next section.

## Employee Engagement

Over the past two decades, employee engagement has emerged as a concept of vital interest to both practitioners and academics. From a practitioner perspective, measuring employee engagement as a means of capturing the 'discretionary effort' of employees resonates strongly with business executives as it supports the increased focus on human capital as a source of competitive advantage within organisations (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2005; Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2009). Management interest in employee engagement began in earnest in 1993 with the development of Gallup Organization's $Q^{12}$ employee engagement instrument (Creglow & Harter, 1998). Subsequent meta-analyses of data collected by Gallup consistently showed employee engagement was positively correlated with customer (r=.22 to .32), profitability (r=.12 to .19) and productivity (r=.16 to. 24) measures and negatively correlated with turnover (r=-.18 to -.28), safety incidents (r=-.18 to -.28), absenteeism (r=-.12 to -.29) and shrinkage (r=-.25 to -.37) measures (Harter, Schmidt, Killham, & Asplund, 2006). These correlations between employee engagement and business performance acted as a catalyst for consulting organisations such as Hewitt Associates, AON Consulting, Towers Perrin and the Corporate Leadership Council to develop employee engagement instruments that also linked employee engagement with financial performance.

Although the wording used on instruments varied, research has shown that a single overarching 'engagement' factor accounts for around half of the variance when 13 engagement measures commonly used by consultants were factor analysed (Langford, 2010). From an empirical perspective, employee engagement has been found to be a distinct yet related construct to organisational commitment and job involvement, constructs that have been used historically to capture similar employee attitudes (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). In addition, from a theoretical perspective, employee engagement is characterised by activated, high arousal and positive feelings at work which is quite distinct from constructs such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment that are associated with more passive feelings

such as contentment and comfort {Inceoglu, 2010 #841}. Although it is important to acknowledge that there is some conceptual overlap between engagement and the above constructs, engagement appears to have a positive affective, cognitive and behavioural component that these other psychometric constructs {Albrecht, 2010 #948}. Therefore, focusing on employee engagement scores appears to be a parsimonious way not only for organisations to monitor discretionary effort but also provides a more active dimension for academics to measure affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions.

Academic interest in the construct of employee engagement can be traced to an influential 1990 article that elaborated on the psychological conditions of engagement and disengagement (Kahn, 1990). Kahn (1990, p. 694) initially defined personal engagement as "the harnessing of organization-members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances". Conversely, Kahn (1990, p. 694) initially defined personal disengagement as "the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performances". The extent to which employees exhibit conditions of engagement and disengagement are influenced by both the psychological experience of work that drives people's attitudes and behaviours (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) as well as a range of internal and external factors that simultaneously influence this experience (Alderfer, 1987). As a starting point, Kahn (1990) used the sociological perspective that an individual's attachment to or detachment from their roles varies under a range of conditions (Goffman, 1961). In particular, Goffman suggested that it was the momentary rather than static circumstances of people's psychological experience that shaped task behaviours. As Goffman's theatrical metaphors were developed from his observations of family and/or social situations, Kahn (1990) needed to change the terms 'attachment to' and 'detachment from' to account for the psychologically complex and emotionally charged social world of organisational life (Diamond & Allcorn, 1985). He

coined the terms personal "engagement' and 'disengagement' to describe how individuals express themselves through role performance to enable them to cope with internal ambivalences and external conditions imposed on them by being members of an ongoing group and system (Kahn, 1990).

The three psychological conditions Kahn (1990) found that influenced engagement and disengagement behaviours were:

Availability – The sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing self in role performances;

Safety – The sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career; and

Meaningfulness – The sense of return on investments of self in role performances.

To the extent that individuals feel (1) they possess the necessary resources to invest self at work; and/or (2) that showing and employing self will not harm their self-mage, status or career; and/or (3) they earn a high return for their investment of self, they will be more likely to be engaged in their role performances. Conversely to the extent individuals feel that (1) they do not possess the necessary resources to invest self at work; and/or (2) there are negative consequences to showing and employing self; and/or (3) investing self does not yield a suitable return, they will be more likely to be disengaged in the their role performances. Therefore, to assist employees being available during their role performances, organisations must help employees: (1) develop appropriate physical and emotional resources; (2) boost feelings of confidence in their abilities to perform at the required standard or better; and (3) deal with their outside life at work as required. Similarly, to encourage employees to feel safe in their roles, organisations should: (1) create a work environment with a reasonable degree of predictability and consistency; (2) ensure interpersonal relationships convey support, trust, openness and flexibility; and (3) promote leader and management behaviours that

authentically demonstrate support, resilience, consistency and trust. Finally, to aid employees in experiencing meaningfulness in their roles, organisations need to: (1) provide jobs with suitable challenge, variety and autonomy; (2) make sure roles fit with employees preferred self-image, status and influence; and (3) create a work environment where dignity, sense of value and self-appreciation are promoted through interpersonal interactions. In summary, Kahn's work suggests organisations need to supply sufficient resources, create safe working environments and provide meaningful work roles for employees to be fully engaged in their role performances.

More recently the role that engagement plays in relationships with job performance has come into sharper focus (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Job performance has been defined as the aggregated value to an organization of the set of behaviours that an employee contributes both directly and indirectly to organizational goals (Borman, 2003). The behavioural conceptualisation of job performance is consistent with self-efficacy's conceptualisation as it reflects human agency and therefore focuses on consequences that are largely under an employee's volitional control. Focusing on behavioural performance also enables objective measures of performance to be assessed to determine engagement's effect on outcomes such as productivity, efficiency, and quality (Rich et al., 2010). From a theoretical perspective, employees who are highly engaged in their work roles not only focus their physical effort on the pursuit of role-related goals, but are also cognitively vigilant and emotionally connected to the endeavour (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Kahn, 1990). In addition, engaged employees invest physical, cognitive and emotional energy into their work roles which facilitates the accomplishment of organisationally valued behaviours (Rich et al., 2010).

Since Kahn's seminal article stimulated academic interest in the concept of engagement, numerous definitions have been proffered. For example, engagement has been defined as "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task

behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, emotional), and active, full role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p. 700); "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002, p. 74); "a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance" (Saks, 2006, p. 602); and "an individual's sense of purpose and focused energy, evident to others in the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward organisational goals" (Macey et al., 2009, p. 7). Common to these definitions is the notion that engagement is both "a positive, work-related psychological state (reflected in words like enthusiasm, energy, passion and absorption)" and "a motivational state reflected in a genuine willingness to invest focused effort towards achieving organisational goals" (Mauno, Kinnunen, Mäkilkangas, & Feldt, 2010, p. 4). Engagement can therefore be characterised as having positive cognitive and affective components that are likely to result in motivated work behaviour (Inceoglu & Fleck, 2010; Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). In effect, the cognitive and affective components represent psychological states that indicate an individual's predisposition or readiness to be engaged or disengaged in their role performance.

A key distinction between the definitions and characterisation of employee engagement as both a positive psychological and motivational state developed predominantly by academics, consultants such as the Gallup Organisation have defined employee engagement as 'the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work' (Harter et al., 2002, p. 269) and view the engaged employee as someone who is 100% psychologically committed to their role. The emphasis in this definition is on inputs rather than on employees' attitudes or affective states and in effect stipulates that employee engagement relies solely on the inputs of the organisation, particularly from the immediate

supervisor (Freeney & Tiernan, 2006). This perspective focuses on actions that occur in the workplace, such as how often feedback is given and does not investigate the employees' feelings. In contrast, extensive academic work on burnout and engagement has been carried out by that focuses more on the employees' feelings and attitudes, and considers the broader picture by viewing engagement as a process rather than simply a state. This perspective also considers the extent to which external factors also determine how motivation is activated as exhibited by the work behaviours displayed by individuals in their role performances.

The extent to which external factors such as job demands influence work engagement has been highlighted through the Job-Demands Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). *Job demands* refer to those physical, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (e.g., exhaustion). Examples of job demands include: high work pressure, an unfavourable physical environment, and emotionally demanding interactions with clients. In contrast, j*ob resources* refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or:

- Functional in achieving work goals
- Reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs
- Stimulate personal growth, learning, and development

Hence, resources are not only necessary to deal with job demands, but they also are important in their own right (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). The Job-Demands Resources model is aligned with Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) that emphasises the motivational potential of job resources at the task level, including autonomy, feedback, and task significance. In effect the Job-Demands Resources model predicts that the greater the influence of environmental stressors, the more activation or effort is required by the individual to cope with these stressors and in turn the greater the physiological costs for the individual. The long-term effect of coping with these external stressors may be a draining

of an individual's energy and a state of breakdown or exhaustion (job burnout) that will be explored in more detail in the next section (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The important distinction is that burnout relates particularly to job demands, whereas job resources such as job control, availability of feedback and learning opportunities are more indicative of engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001).

## Job Burnout

Although employee engagement has received much academic and practitioner attention in recent years, articles on the related psychological construct of job burnout first appeared 30 years ago (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Employee engagement has been labelled as the positive psychology anti-thesis of job burnout which is conceptualised as a psychological syndrome developed in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Unlike other research conducted in the workplace which typically uses a 'top down' approach, the construct of job burnout was first developed using a non-academic, "grass roots" approach (Maslach, 2001). This process parallels that undertaken with engagement where Kahn (1990) used an inductive, grounded theory based approach to inform academic perspectives of engagement. By contrast, the Gallup Organisation followed an iterative process in devising their $Q^{12}$ employee engagement instrument (Harter et al., 2006).

An advanced key word search on Google Scholar (September 28, 2010) that was limited to the Business and Social Sciences subject areas yielded a comparable number of hits for employee engagement (34,600) and job burnout (30,000). At the same time, the number of journal articles found doing a key word search on questia.com (September 28, 2010) was similar with employee engagement (122) having approximately 20% more hits than job burnout (102). However, the academic heritage of job burnout is illustrated by the much greater number of books (91) that have been written on this subject compared to employee engagement (37). In contrast, the popularity of employee engagement as a practitioner

oriented concept can be seen by the vast number of magazine articles (329) written on the subject compared to job burnout (19). Therefore, the literature on job burnout provides insights into the more recent phenomenon of employee engagement.

Job burnout is made up of three dimensions: overwhelming exhaustion (exhaustion); feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job (cynicism) and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of personal accomplishment (inefficacy) (Maslach, 2001). These three dimensions describe a negative affective-cognitive work-related motivational state in contrast to the positive affective-cognitive motivational state associated with employee engagement. Exhaustion represents the individual stress dimension of burnout and refers to feelings of being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources. Cynicism (or depersonalisation) represents the interpersonal context dimension of burnout and refers to a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to various aspects of the job. Inefficacy (or lack of accomplishment) represents the self-evaluation dimension of burnout and refers to feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity at work.

The first two dimensions (exhaustion and cynicism) are strongly related to each other and form the core of burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). The third dimension (inefficacy) plays a different, less prominent role in job burnout leading to the suggestion that personal accomplishment (the opposite of inefficacy) develops largely independently of exhaustion and cynicism (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Leiter, 1993). Alternatively, inefficacy has been conceptualised as a function of either exhaustion or cynicism or a combination of the two dimensions (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). For example, an individual's sense of effectiveness is likely to be eroded by chronic, overwhelming work demands that contribute to exhaustion and/or cynicism; equally it is difficult to gain a sense of accomplishment when feeling exhausted or cynical (Maslach, 2001). The meta-analysis by Lee et al (1996) found that exhaustion and cynicism were positively related to job demands such as role conflict, role stress and workload (mean r = .51 across 6 correlates).; negatively related to resource issues

such as supervisor support (mean r = -.31 across 2 correlates); positively related to turnover intentions (mean r = .38 across 2 correlates); and negatively related to organisational commitment and job satisfaction (mean r = -.40 across 4 correlates) (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). In contrast, inefficacy arose more often from a lack of performance feedback and social support and was negatively related to work friends and participation (mean r = -.40 across 2 correlates); and positively related to control coping (mean r = .52) (Lee & Ashforth, 1996).

These findings show that exhaustion and cynicism are clearly intertwined as their correlates with a range of demands, resources and behavioural and attitudinal outcomes are very similar whereas the correlates for inefficacy differ markedly. In particular Lee et al (1996) found exhaustion and cynicism were primarily related to a range of job demand and resource factors whereas inefficacy was only correlated with one (work friends). With respect to behavioural and attitudinal variables, Lee et al (1996) found the correlation between control coping and inefficacy was particularly strong (-.52) compared to exhaustion (-.30) and cynicism (-.28) whereas the correlation between turnover intentions was stronger for exhaustion (.44) and cynicism (.31) compared to inefficacy (.16). Therefore, addressing job burnout requires reviewing the demands placed on people at work, the amount of performance feedback they receive and the level of support provided.

Lee et al (1996) also found the correlations between job satisfaction and all three job burnout dimensions were fairly similar with exhaustion (-.31), cynicism (-.44) and inefficacy (-.29). These correlations are broadly in line with the range of .40 and .52 for job burnout and job satisfaction reported by Maslach et al (2001) where they concluded that the constructs are clearly linked. However, the specific nature of the link is unknown as the direction of influence is unclear. Speculation about the relationship between job satisfaction and job burnout is analogous to conjecture about the relationship between job satisfaction and performance. Although a meta-analysis of 312 samples from 254 studies found a mean average corrected correlation of .30 between job satisfaction and performance that confirmed

their positive relationship, the authors were unable to shed further insight into the specific nature of this link than had been determined in earlier studies (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Therefore, the question of whether job satisfaction affects performance or vice versa or whether these constructs have a reciprocal relationship remains unanswered (Judge et al., 2001). Notwithstanding the intuitive appeal of focusing on increasing job satisfaction in order to reduce job burnout, the correlations found in the meta-analysis by Lee et al (1996) suggest that addressing cognitive factors such as control coping; job demand factors such as role conflict, role stress, workload; and resource factors such as supervisor support have greater potential to ameliorate negative manifestations resulting from job burnout. In turn, addressing these factors should reduce turnover intentions and increase organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

## Self-efficacy, Engagement and Burnout

Over the past decade the emergence of the positive psychology movement has heralded a shift from a preoccupation with repairing the worst things in life to a focus on building positive qualities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Viewed in this context, there was a need to re-conceptualise job burnout from a negative affective-cognitive, motivational state to its positive psychology mirror. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was specifically developed in response to this broad paradigmatic shift by replacing job burnout's three dimensions with three positive work engagement ones (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Under this reclassification approach, exhaustion became vigour, cynicism was turned into dedication and inefficacy was changed to absorption. While the UWES instrument's first two dimensions (vigour and dedication) are closely related to work motivation with their focus on direction, intensity/effort and persistence, the third dimension (absorption) is arguably more closely related to self-efficacy with its focus on effectiveness and accomplishment. By converting job burnout into work engagement, the absorption sub-scale becomes the tangible link between employee engagement and self-efficacy. By contrast, the

vigour and dedication sub-scales directly connect employee engagement with work motivation and indirectly connect it with self-efficacy.

Although engagement can be characterised as a cognitive-motivational state in the same way that self-efficacy has been (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006), the role and influence of affect in motivation is fundamentally different. Affect can be described as a phenomenological state of feeling that is usually captured in terms of emotional adjectives (Watson, 2000). To illustrate, the affective component of engagement is explicitly recognised and typified by adjectives such as 'vigour' (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007), 'valued' (Kahn, 1990), 'enthusiastic' (Macey et al., 2009) or 'detached' (Hochschild, 2003). These affective psychological states can impact an individual's motivated behaviour in either a positive, neutral or negative manner which supports describing engagement as an affective, cognitive-motivational state. In contrast, self-efficacy theory posits that affect is self-regulated through the exercise of personal control (Bandura, 1997). As a result, an individual's affective response to a situation will be regulated by the strength of their belief in their self-efficacy that in turn negates affect's influence on motivated behaviour. Therefore, while engagement and self-efficacy can both be considered to be cognitive-motivational states, the role of affect in motivating action distinguishes them. Affect is explicitly recognised within employee engagement as part of one's psychological state that can lead to motivated action whereas affect does not play a direct part in motivating action according to self-efficacy theory.

Four antecedents to employee engagement have been identified: (1) capacity to engage; (2) reason or motivation to engage; (3) freedom to engage; and (4) knowledge to engage (Macey et al., 2009). These four antecedents reinforce employee engagement's link to social cognitive theory and its key concept of self-efficacy. First, increasing self-efficacy helps employees develop a greater sense of confidence in their competence to undertake their work responsibilities and therefore builds their capacity to perform their jobs and become engaged in their work. Second, self-efficacy is a self-regulatory process that involves

continual re-adjustment of self-set goals (Bandura, 1997). This self-regulatory process provides the mechanism to stimulate and sustain motivation so that an individual's engagement is maintained in order to meet these goals. Third, self-efficacy is built on the premise of personal agency and control so as employees develop a stronger sense of personal agency and control of their environment, they find greater freedom to engage in their jobs. Therefore, social cognitive theory provides the theoretical framework to increase employee engagement through building confidence, establishing a positive reinforcing cycle of self-set goals and creating a stronger sense of personal agency and control. The resulting lift in self-efficacy increases employee's capacity sustains motivation and liberates employees to have the freedom to engage. Once the prerequisites for employees to be engaged have been provided it is then up to the organization to address the remaining factor: creating a strategically focused work environment that communicates the organisation's strategy to its employees so that they can clearly see how their work is aligned with the strategy. Employee engagement should flourish when these four antecedents are supported by the organisation.

Although the employee engagement definitions set out earlier place different emphases on the ways that engagement can be operationalised, their similarities also suggest there are conceptual overlaps between these constructs. Further, the high correlations of ($r = .71$ to $.76$) found between self-efficacy and engagement in an exploratory meta-analysis (Christian & Slaughter, 2007) suggests these constructs may be describing the same or very similar psychological phenomenon. Therefore, it is important to understand the relationship between self-efficacy and engagement. Table 3 sets out in chronological order a comparative analysis between five existing and one proposed engagement-related cognitive-motivational states (self-efficacy; job burnout; personal engagement; work engagement; employee engagement; and learned engagement) that uses their underlying dimensions as a classification framework.

**Table 3**
***Comparative Analysis of 'Engagement- Related' Cognitive/Motivational States***

| Construct | Self-Efficacy | Job Burnout* | Personal Engagement | Work Engagement | Employee Engagement | Learned Engagement | Job Engagement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Author (Year) | Bandura (1977) | Maslach (1981) | Kahn (1990) | Schaufeli (2002) | Macey (2009) | Carter (2010) | Rich et al (2010) |
| Dimension 1^ | Confidence | Exhaustion | Availability | Vigour | Capacity | Resources | Cognition |
| Dimension 2^ | Agency | Inefficacy | Safety | Absorption | Freedom | Control | Affect |
| Dimension 3^ | Outcomes | Cynicism | Meaningfulness | Dedication | Motivation | Reason | Behaviour |

*The Job Burnout construct is a reverse measure of engagement i.e. disengagement.
^ For simplicity, each dimension has been labelled as a single name.

For each cognitive-motivational state, the three principal dimensions are presented and aligned with conceptually similar dimensions from the other engagement related cognitive-motivational states. For example, Dimension 1 suggests the dimensions of confidence in one's competence, exhaustion, availability, vigour and capacity are theoretically similar ways of describing the same underlying state; Dimension 2 shows that personal agency and control, inefficacy, safety, absorption and freedom are different terms for depicting the same underlying state; and Dimension 3 proposes outcome expectancies, cynicism, meaningfulness, dedication and motivation are illustrating the same underlying state. The central unifying theme behind each dimension is then set out as a single dimension under the proposed 'Learned Engagement' state. Consistent with the other states in Table 3, learned engagement operates as a cognitive-motivational state where psychological processes interact with environmental influences and individuals can discover and become skilled at engagement provided they are given the appropriate resources, control and reason to be engaged. The rationale behind this taxonomy is expanded on below.

Each of the terms used in Dimension 1 reflects the fact that employees need physical, psychological and emotional resources to feel self-efficacious, engaged and prevent job burnout. Individuals need resources to: feel confident in their competence and have influence over what they do (self-efficacy - confidence); avoid the draining of emotional resources (job

burnout – exhaustion); feel capable of investing energy and self into their role performance (personal engagement - availability); sustain high levels of energy and persistence (work engagement - vigour); and generate and maintain goal directed energy even when faced with obstacles (employee engagement - capacity). Without appropriate resources to support and nurture their behaviour in the workplace, employees become less confident, disengaged and emotionally exhausted. Conversely, providing the necessary physical, psychological and emotional resources will activate employees in their role performances.

Each of the terms used in Dimension 2 reflects the fact that employees need a sense of control over their work environment in order to feel self-efficacious, engaged and prevent job burnout. Individuals need control to: feel they can intentionally influence their environment (self-efficacy - agency); avoid a lack of personal accomplishment and a feeling of incompetence (job burnout – inefficacy); feel situations are trustworthy, secure and without fear of negative consequences (personal engagement - safety); remain happily engrossed with one's work (work engagement - absorption); and feel safe to take action under their own initiative (employee engagement - freedom). Without a sense of control in their work environment, employees become less proactive, disengaged and ineffective. Conversely, helping employees gain the ability to regulate their behaviour and feel trusted and safe will galvanise employees to take action in their role performances.

Each of the terms used in Dimension 3 reflects the fact that employees need a reason to invest themselves in their roles as part of being self-efficacious, engaged and prevent job burnout. Individuals need a reason to: believe that effort will lead to successful outcomes (self-efficacy – outcome expectancies); see the significance, value and importance of their work to avoid disinterest (job burnout – cynicism); feel worthwhile and valued with appropriate incentives (personal engagement - meaningfulness); be strongly involved with and experience a sense of significance regarding their work (work engagement - dedication); and undertake work that interests them and leaves them feeling treated in a valued way

(employee engagement - motivation). Without meaningful, valued work with realistic outcome expectancies, employees lose their reason to work, become disengaged and cynical. Conversely, providing employees with autonomous, worthwhile and valued jobs will create incentives for employees to invest themselves in their role performances.

In summary, there is a strong degree of congruence between these cognitive-motivational states. The proposed learned engagement cognitive-motivational state suggests employees can discover and become skilled at being engaged in organisational settings provided they are given the appropriate resources, control and reason to be engaged. Note: to minimise possible confusion over terms, the words employee engagement and work engagement will be used interchangeably throughout the rest of the dissertation.

## Interventions to increase employee engagement

A key challenge for organisations is how to increase the level of engagement exhibited and reported by employees given the sheer number of engagement drivers that apply across a range of organisational contexts (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Mauno et al., 2010). These drivers can be classified as organisational-related facets or employee level outcomes of engagement (Inceoglu & Fleck, 2010) of which meta-analysis studies show that the strongest and most reliable drivers of engagement include: feedback, autonomy, resources, social, support, organisational climate, self-efficacy, optimism, job control, trust, fairness and leadership (Christian & Slaughter, 2007; Halbesleben, 2010b; Mauno et al., 2010). This wide range of drivers suggests increasing employee engagement is a complex and daunting task for organisations. Nevertheless, these meta-analyses found that job resources in the form of feedback, autonomy/control and social support had estimated population correlations ranging from 0.20 to 0.46 while personal resources in the form of self-efficacy had estimated population correlations ranging from 0.31 to 0.76. Therefore, organisational-related interventions focusing on increasing feedback, autonomy/control and social support for employees offer

significant scope to increase employee engagement. Similarly, employee level interventions designed to raise self-efficacy appear to offer even greater scope to increase employee engagement given the higher correlations. Indeed, the strength of the overlap between self-efficacy and the three dimensions of work engagement (Christian & Slaughter, 2007; Halbesleben, 2010b; Salanova, Peiró, & Schaufeli, 2002; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) raises the issue of possible conceptual overlap between these constructs (Mauno et al., 2010). The very high correlations between self-efficacy and work engagement are not surprising given that it has previously been suggested that absorption (the reverse measure of lack of personal accomplishment or inefficacy in job burnout) reflects a personality characteristic similar to self-efficacy (Demerouti et al., 2001). Further, self-efficacy plays a crucial role in explaining work engagement as the positive gain spiral it has been shown to initiate with job performance can be plausibly extended to include engagement (Salanova, Schaufeli, Xanthopoulou, & Bakker, 2010).

Given the close relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement, training designed to augment efficacy beliefs will result in increased work engagement (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). Social cognitive theory posits that self-efficacy beliefs are developed from four principal sources of information: enactive mastery experiences (indicators of capability); vicarious experiences (transmission of competency and comparison of attainment levels); verbal persuasion (external assurance of capability); and physiological and affective states (vulnerability to dysfunction) (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, training programs should provide as many opportunities as possible for participants to boost their self-efficacy beliefs through exposure to these four information sources. For example, practical exercises that provide experiences of vocational success (mastery experiences); role models of good performance (vicarious experiences); coaching and encouragement (verbal persuasion); and reducing fear of rejection/failure (physiological and affective states) (Carter, Nesbit, & Joy, 2010; Schaufeli

& Salanova, 2010). Using these principles and practices in training will stimulate positive increases in self-efficacy that in turn will increase work engagement and performance.

## Occupational Stress and Self-efficacy

The Job Burnout section highlighted the negative consequences of role conflict, role stress and workload on employees becoming emotionally exhausted and cynical. In effect, job demands that tax or exceed individual's perceived capability to manage them are major sources of organisationally induced job or occupational stress. The introduction of more and more computerised technologies and the concurrent reduction in the perceived control and social support available in the workplace is an example of organisational factors that create a stressful work environment that in turn saps job satisfaction (Bandura, 1997). By applying the lessons that have been learned from stress management techniques, increasing efficacy beliefs is a critical step towards relieving organisational sources of stress (Bandura, 1997).

Besides the wide variety of factors that contribute to organisational stress, emotionally taxing occupations also cause significant job stress and were the primary reason behind the development of the job burnout construct. Although the 'depersonalisation' component of job burnout (classified as cynicism) is unique to human services, the dimensions of emotional exhaustion (classified as exhaustion) and lack of any sense of personal accomplishment (classified as inefficacy) are not. Helping employees develop stronger belief in their self-efficacy is a critical step towards reducing job burnout as employees with a high sense of efficacy resort to problem-solving coping whereas those with low self-efficacy resort to dysfunctional ways of coping (Bandura, 1997). At the personal level, people need support to develop the skills and self-efficacy necessary to manage their work life so that they have a sense of pride and accomplishment in their work. At the organisational level, work should only be evaluated on the basis of what employees can control (Bandura, 1997). In addition, work should involve meaningful activities with variety and challenge and the organisation

must provide a system of social support from co-workers and efficacious leadership that creates a sense of mission and purpose (Bandura, 1997).

In summary, instilling stronger self-efficacy beliefs in the skills required to conduct their work effectively coupled with appropriate evaluation mechanisms and social support will reduce organisational and occupational stress and increase productivity.

## Organisation theatre

*"The limitation of riots, moral questions aside, is that they cannot win and their participants know it. Hence, rioting is not revolutionary but reactionary because it invites defeat. It involves an emotional catharsis, but it must be followed by a sense of futility." - Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The power of theatre to shape, transform and control social systems has been well documented since Aristotle wrote his first play. Theatre, in all its guises, from street theatre in India to a Broadway show, a student short film on You Tube, a play in a Brazilian slum or a Shakespearean production in Stratford provides a unique and multi-layered vehicle to promote and solidify social order or challenge the existing mores, structures and hierarchy. In recent years, the use of theatre and theatrical techniques as organisational interventions, ostensibly to improve social cohesion and communicate important values has grown markedly. However, little empirical research has been carried out in this field and as a result, little is known about the impact of theatrical interventions in organisational life. The following section describes the history and use of theatre in organisations.

### *Organisations as Theatre*

Drama based perspectives on organisations have largely been based on the metaphor of social life as theatre which emphasizes both the analysis and explanation of social actions (Schreyögg & Häpfl, 2004). The literary critic Kenneth Burke first coined the term "Dramatism" as a model to explore this emphasis with its two basic notions of the *Pentad* and the *Ratios* (Burke, 1945, 1969). The Pentad includes the five elements Burke considered essential in any analysis of social action: the act, the scene, the agent, the agency, and the purpose. Analysing the interaction of these elements provides insight into social and organisational performance (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Schreyögg & Häpfl, 2004). Burke's

notion that behaviour was a process of people relating to each other as actors was a key influence on Ervin Goffman in his articulation of the concept of "Dramaturgy" in his classic "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" (1959) where he uncovered the hidden theatrical structure of social, and by extension, organisational life. Goffman also drew on the work of Gustav Ichheiser who saw that the process of everyday interaction between *actors* and *spectators* was of fundamental importance to the understanding of social order (Ichheiser, 1970). Goffman's work is particularly important in understanding power and hierarchy in organisations as his work is seen to be potentially emancipatory as social actors become disenchanted with their lot and seek to change it (Clark & Mangham, 2004b).

### *Why Theatre?*

The use of theatre within societies as a cultural reinforcement mechanism has a long history dating back to the ancient Greeks where plays sought to render the everyday 'unhidden' to audiences (Lyman, 1975). By 'showing' the audience snapshots of everyday life through the process of mimesis, the Greeks used theatre as an activity that reflexively confronts the way in which members of the society normally perceive, value, feel or behave (Clark & Mangham, 2004b). Turner (1984) takes this notion a further step by suggesting that performative genres such as theatre are essential part of human relatedness - "any society that hopes to be imperishable must carve out for itself a piece of space and a period of time in which it can look honestly at itself". This piece of suspended time and space is referred to as 'liminality' and is defined as a "betwixt-and-between condition often involving seclusion from the everyday scene" (Turner, 1984, p. 21). Liminality provides a transitional period for groups where the past is momentarily negated, and the future has not yet begun, an instant of pure potentiality when everything trembles in the balance (Turner, 1982). As a performative genre, theatre helps the audience see their own reality in new ways enabling them to talk *about* what they normally talk about and promote generative conversations (Meisiek & Barry, 2005). Four factors appear critical for theatre to work as a generative conversation piece:

morphism (the resemblance to reality); aesthetics (sufficient appeal to be engaged but not overwhelmed); safety (bounded liminality to promote curiosity not fear); and discardability (allowing the audience to move on at the right time). In effect, theatre provides the opportunity for spectators to reflect on how they feel about how they feel or how they think about how they think (Turner, 1982).

Theatre's inherent complexity with its production of signifiers, use of actors, environmental objects and other signs renders a simplistic stimulus/response-logic perspective of theatre, where the audience's response can be assessed in terms of attitude or behavioural change, inadequate (Schreyögg, 2001). Theatre provides a contrasting, non-rational argument to change generally and disruption of power and hierarchy within organisations specifically. As the Greeks first realized, the artistic form *shows* whereas the intellectual form *tells* (Taylor, 2008). Therefore, artistic forms facilitate meaning to be apprehended by audiences in one or a combination of up to three ways: (1) through an aesthetic experience, by bringing to the fore those human potentialities that the social system has repressed and in showing the causes of repression (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990); (2) through resonance with their own life experience (Bateson, 1979); and (3) as an enjoyable experience that can be easily remembered and shared (Taylor, 2008). In effect, artistic forms bypass the conscious critical filters that a logical deductive or inductive approach uses and enable sense making in a visceral and/or emotive manner to take place.

While each of the above points offers a plausible explanation to how meaning is apprehended by audiences, the theory of second order observation (Luhmann, 1998) provides a particularly useful platform for reflecting on the basic observation process undertaken by organisation theatre audiences (Schreyögg, 2001) as well as in other theatre contexts (Brooker, 2006; Kershaw, 1992). Rather than watching the actors perform a play, the audience is actually observing the result of observations others (i.e. the actors/script writers) have made about their organisation. This process confronts the audience as it is likely to

differ markedly from their usual perception of their reality and as a result, brings about *reality duplication* (Luhmann, 1998) or a *splitting experience* (Schreyögg, 2001). In effect, the audience observes the familiar from an unfamiliar angle enabling them to view two different realities simultaneously and making the process *reflexive* (Schreyögg, 2001). The 'taken for granted' reality becomes a contingent one through the imposed disorder of reality duplication, allowing alternative realities to be considered and different outcomes to be achieved (Schreyögg, 2001). By imposing disorder, introducing reflexivity and creating possibilities, existing power relationships and hierarchical structures are viewed differently, a key objective of Boal's Forum Theatre (2000) as shall be seen later. In effect, organisation theatre confronts the audience with a different perspective of their familiar problem construction and thereby initiates a close examination of habituated patterns of behaviour and established perceptual constructions (Schreyögg & Häpfl, 2004). Importantly, second order observation does not produce unequivocal, predictable results as audience members will each need to find their own way to address the issues raised (Schreyögg, 2001).

### *Theatre as Technology*

Four "theatre as technology" traditions have been identified by Clark and Mangham (2004): Radical Theatre; Organisation Theatre; Situation Theatre and Corporate Theatre (Clark & Mangham, 2004a). The first tradition, Radical Theatre (Coopey, 1998) refers extensively to Augusto Boal's work with Forum Theatre but fails to articulate what's different about Radical Theatre from Forum Theatre, leaving the impression that they are interchangeable labels. In contrast, the second tradition, Organisation Theatre (Schreyögg, 2001), is an excellent example of theatrical performance creating liminal space for audiences as envisaged by Turner (1984). Organisation Theatre's emancipatory aims for participants and tailor-making of plays for specific issues and organisations provides an environment for making discussable that which is considered non-discussable. In effect, by confronting the audience with hidden conflicts, subconscious behavioural patterns and painful truths, the

dynamics of organisation theatre serve to shake things into action (Schreyögg, 2001) or in Kurt Lewin's terms, *unfreeze* blocked situations (Lewin, 1952). The third tradition, Situation Theatre (Meisiek, 2002) is a derivation of Organisation Theatre that offers a platform for 'analogically mediated inquiry' with a clear problem-awareness and change stimulus agenda. The theatre performance acts as a metaphor of organisational life and constitutes an analogical source that informs interpretations of the organisational target (Barry, 1994). The last tradition, Corporate Theatre, is seen simply as a vehicle for promoting the views of a particular group within an organisation by taking advantage of the liminality and reflective opportunities that a theatre setting provides (Clark & Mangham, 2004a). As such, audience members are not confronted with and/or given pause to reflect on organisational problems as there is no admission there are any (Clark & Mangham, 2004a). Overall, Corporate Theatre appears to be primarily a communications vehicle for the group commissioning the theatre performance and as such offers limited opportunities to address substantive organisational issues. In contrast, the first three technologies appear to be similar in character and purpose through challenging the audience and therefore offer genuine opportunities to directly confront organisational problems.

Within the realm of Organisation Theatre itself, theatre may be used in three ways: a mirror that provides contrasting realities; a window that shows hidden/overlooked scenes or potential future ones; or a passage-like form where the audience has the opportunity to participate on stage and craft new possibilities in an emergent rather than scripted setting (Meisiek & Barry, 2007). Each of these theatre forms constitutes a type of analogically mediated inquiry that informs audience interpretations of the organisational target either in a relatively direct 'comparison' manner (Meisiek & Barry, 2007) or through an inference making 'domain interaction' process where meaning emerges from the blending of the source (the play) and the target (the audience) (Cornelissen, 2004). The uses of theatre and mechanisms articulated above provide clear support for the popularity of Forum Theatre as

the organisation theatre format of choice as it concurrently embodies all three usage characteristics (mirror, window and passage-like). Further, Forum Theatre allows the audience to either undertake a comparison of the play with their perception of reality as suggested by Meisiek and Barry (2007) and/or, given the interactive nature of Forum Theatre between the actors and audience (spect-actors), enable the audience to infer meaning via the domain interaction process advocated by Cornelissen (2004). The next section briefly describes the development and theoretical background to Forum Theatre's development.

### *Forum Theatre (Theatre of the Oppressed)*

Forum Theatre is the form of Boal's work that is most commonly used in organisations (Boal, 1979). However, it is one of the four techniques (the others being newspaper theatre, statue theatre and invisible theatre) developed by Boal under the broader umbrella of 'Theatre of the Oppressed' which he created as a socio-political activation device for underclass liberation in Brazil in the 1960's. Forum Theatre's express purpose was to raise audience awareness of existing power relationships, create an environment where the potential for change was highlighted and empower the audience to act (Meisiek & Barry, 2007). Boal used two techniques in Forum Theatre to achieve his aims: a staged dialectic and a related dialogue. The staged dialectic denoted 'conflict, contradiction, confrontation and defiance' in order to create an engaging analogy while at the same time needing to reflect the lived experience of the audience in order to generate change-related dialogue (Boal, 2000). The dialectic view is extracted from Marxist analysis of economic structure and provides a general perspective on social life that is fundamentally committed to the concept of process (Benson, 1977). Each of the four principles of dialectical analysis (Social Construction/Production; Totality; Contradiction; and Praxis) can be seen to influence Boal's creation of Forum Theatre. Praxis in particular (the free and creative reconstruction of social arrangements on the basis of a reasoned analysis) is critical as a core objective of Forum Theatre is to help become people become active agents reconstructing their own social

relations and ultimately themselves. Following on from the staged dialectic, the related dialogue component of Forum Theatre provides the opportunity for participants to explore their situation as equals as well as the possibilities associated with how things could be different. From an organisational perspective, Forum Theatre creates a suitable environment for participants to re-consider their current reality and explore the possibilities of a different organisation. In effect, the staged dialectic mobilises participants to pursue their interests and greatly enhance their power in the organisation (Benson, 1977). It is this mobilisation of energy and catalytic impact on personal agency that sets Forum Theatre apart as an organisation theatre technology.

To better understand the role of Forum Theatre as an interventional form of Organisation theatre, it is critical to review its philosophical underpinnings and pedigree. Boal expressly regards theatre as necessarily political 'as a weapon……the ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theatre and utilize it as a tool for domination……But the theatre can also be a weapon for liberation' (Clark & Mangham, 2004b, p. 843). Boal viewed classical Aristotelian catharsis as a major tool for domination through the emotional journey experience by the audience and as a consequence, re-conceptualised catharsis as a political process whereby the audience's emotions and energy are unleashed to fight oppression and domination (Meisiek, 2004). Indeed, Boal sees the theatrical forms he helped to create as 'a rehearsal for the revolution' (Clark & Mangham, 2004b, p. 846) which arguably explains why the military junta first jailed and tortured Boal when they took power in Brazil before exiling him to Argentina. Yet in spite of the overt political nature of Forum Theatre, a primary tool for achieving its aims, the staged dialectic, is borrowed from Freire's (2000) liberation pedagogy, an education not political theory. This experiential 'problem-posing' education pedagogy is designed to empower students by extracting the power they already possess to liberate themselves from oppression (Crittenden, 2008). This process is referred to as "conscientisation" or critical consciousness and focuses on achieving an in-depth

understanding of the world, allowing for the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions and taking action against the oppressive elements in one's life (Freire, 2000). Although Freire primarily developed conscientisation as a tool for educating Brazil's poor and illiterate underclass, the process of bringing one into consciousness through a dialogical interaction also acted as a tool of liberation by helping people gain a sense of their own agency as independent human beings. By incorporating conscientisation into Forum Theatre, Boal helped the audience (known as 'spect-actors') gain their own sense of personal agency.

When Boal moved to Europe in the 1970's, he discovered that the common form of oppression in western society was psychological oppression (which he characterised as 'cops in the head') rather than physical oppression ('cops in the street') (Dwyer, 2007). In effect, the mechanisms of limiting the actions of people had been internalised instead of being driven by external coercion (Meisiek, 2004). In this regard, Boal was not alone as the theme of mass society being manipulated through a variety of psychological tools has been explored by other commentators (Foucault, Martin, Gutman, & Hutton, 1988; Rose, 1999; Townley, 1993) and will not be expanded upon in this dissertation. Boal believed that theatrical engagement could be used as a tool for the dissolution of oppression, regardless of whether the oppression was psychological or physical (Meisiek, 2004). Therefore, Forum Theatre was adapted into becoming a therapeutic tool designed to move the audience through the emotional process of catharsis to destroy perceived psychological barriers to action (Boal, 1995; Dwyer, 2007).

Catharsis develops from the emotional disturbance and emotional dissonance the spect-actors feel from watching Forum Theatre (Boal, 1995). The emotional imbalance created by the play's staging causes the spect-actors to intervene with and feel empathy for the actors on stage (Meisiek, 2004). Boal achieves this state of emotional turmoil by treating the theatre as an *aesthetic* space he argues is well suited to therapeutic goals (Dwyer, 2007). The aesthetic space comprises three elements: plasticity (making everything/anything possible by making time, objects and actions all variable); dichotomy (the simultaneous co-existence

of fiction and reality that can be influenced by the spect-actors and allows them to perform self-observations); and tele-microscopic (allowing participants to focus/zoom/observe the action) (Boal, 2006; Dwyer, 2007; Meisiek, 2004). By making the theatre an aesthetic space, Boal creates a therapeutic setting where spect-actors confront the self who is 'here and now' talking about a self that is 'then and there' (Boal, 1995, pp. 23-27).

During the transition in Boal's focus from the 'cops on the street' metaphor in Forum Theatre to the 'cops in the head' metaphor used in Rainbow of Desire, Boal changes his meaning of catharsis (Jackson, 1995, p. xxi). Whereas Boal framed Aristotle's catharsis as "the purging of society of its members asocial tendencies" (Jackson, 1995, p. xxi), in Rainbow of Desire Boal saw that individuals can be changed by a catharsis that is not the sole province of the controlling group. Therefore, catharsis for Boal became "releasing desires which socially constructed blocks had imprisoned" (Jackson, 1995, p. xxi). By reframing the process of catharsis from a macro societal level to micro individual level, Boal moved the use of theatre from an externally driven, socio-political issue to an internally derived, psychological one. Although Boal believed individuals have within themselves unlimited potential to change (with the proviso that they must want to change), "there is a contradiction between the (more or less) Freudian psychodynamic theory Boal draws on and the broader political aspirations he espouses" (Dwyer, 2007, p. 4). To address this inconsistency, Dwyer (2007) suggests a systems theory approach should be incorporated to the therapeutic process offered by Rainbow of Desire that more closely aligns Boal's approach with Moreno's. By introducing new information into the system as a whole, the therapist becomes an agent of change where maintaining neutrality is highly sought after (Dwyer, 2007). Recognising that behavioural change is subject to both internal and external forces also directly corresponds with Bandura's (1986) principle of triadic reciprocal causation.

In spite of Forum Theatre's efficacy as a cathartic and catalytic process, its use as a technology for change in organisations in developed countries is not without criticism

(Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman, 2006; Davis & O'Sullivan, 2000; Dwyer, 2004). For example, it is seen to be problematic to transpose a “third-world” aesthetic of resistance to a “first-world” aesthetic of self-help (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994). It has also been argued that Boal’s shift from a focus on the collective to that of the individual and his assertion that “only spec-actors who are victims of the same oppression as the character (by identity or analogy) can replace the oppressed protagonist” (Boal, 2000) has been challenged on the basis that he has not followed Marxist principles (Booton, 2006; Davis & O'Sullivan, 2000). A key component of Forum Theatre is role of a facilitator known as “the Joker” whose task is to stimulate debate, place interrogative rather than affirmative questions, act neutrally and avoid actions that could manipulate or influence the audience. Boal’s use of interrogative questions draws on Freire’s (2000) philosophy of critical conscientiousness in education and its use of dialogic pedagogy where it is the student’s role to question and challenge domination. However, critics suggest that the Joker can never be completely neutral, given the Joker’s juggling act of maintaining neutrality while concurrently asking the audience intentionally provocative questions, potentially resulting in a tendency for the audience to blame the victim rather than seek alternatives (Booton, 2006). Notwithstanding the merits of the above criticisms, Forum Theatre’s overall attributes provide a rich technology for confronting organisational challenges while nevertheless being susceptible to accusations of being unfaithful to true Marxist philosophy on the one hand while on the other, falling into the trap of romanticising the victim in the pursuit of ideological objectives.

### *Theatre Taxonomy*

In order to effectively analyse the theatre traditions identified by Clark and Mangham (2004) as well as develop a more comprehensive understanding of what impact they may or may not have as organisational interventions, a classification framework is required. Four elements have been identified that enable such a classification: the nature of the theatrical presentation itself; its organisational specificity; the defined audience; and who commissions

the performance (Schreyögg & Häpfl, 2004). Therefore variations in the way in which organisation theatre is conducted, the amount of organisation specific content that is included in the performance, the nature of the audience for whom the play has been written and finally who has commissioned and paid for the script's creation and performance are all key elements involved in classifying theatre formats. In addition, the two primary tensions to emerge from the study of theatre as a technology are *control of the 'role'* and *control of the 'script'* (Nissley, Taylor, & Houden, 2004). From the target audience's perspective, control of the role can vary from passive (by using professional actors) through interactive (directing performers) to self-direction. Similarly, control of the script can vary from passive (by using professional writers) through interactive (co-written) to self-improvisation. As the 3 X 3 matrix in Figure 1 shows, control of *script* and control of *role* move on a continuum from greater management control to greater worker control.

**Figure 1**

***Framework for Critically Analysing Theatre-Based Training***

| **Control of Role** / **Control of Script** | **Passive Audiences** | **Directed Performer** | **Self-Directed/ Active Performer** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Other scripted** | **Management Controlled** | | |
| **Co-scripted** | | | |
| **Self-Scripted** | | | **Worker Controlled** |

**Source: (Nissley et al., 2004)**

By definition, when the control of *script* and *role* reside with management, theatre-based training can be depicted as a powerful managerial tool for shaping organisational values and performance. In this situation, a theatre training intervention has a panoptic impact with workers effectively remain imprisoned within the organisation. At the other end of the spectrum, theatre-based interventions where the control of *script* and *role* resides with

workers have the potential to change the status quo and generate substantive organisation change. As Boal's aim with Forum Theatre was to democratise the theatre by turning the audience into 'spect-actors' and in so doing confront the power relations between actor and audience, it remains the pre-eminent format (Nissley et al., 2004). In effect, the act of empowering the audience through control of the role and the script has the potential to fundamentally shift power relationships and hierarchical structures within organisations.

Forum Theatre's ability to show an audience different perspectives of the familiar, 'unfreeze' people's frame of reference and potentially break habitual behavioural patterns make it an attractive intervention format when organisation change is required (Taylor, 2008). Forum Theatre is particularly well suited as an unfreezing vehicle because it meets the three identified requirements for unfreezing to occur: disconfirming data; anxiety or guilt; psychological safety (Schein, 2004). Taylor (2008) has highlighted the key ways in which organisation theatre meets these criteria. First, Luhmann's theory of second-order observation provides a powerful source of disconfirming data because the audience sees the familiar from an unfamiliar angle enabling them to view two different realities simultaneously and experiencing a splitting experience (Luhmann, 1998; Schreyögg, 2001). In turn the familiarity of the play's content coupled with the confronting nature of the splitting experience gets the audience emotionally involved and creates considerably anxiety amongst audience members (Meisiek, 2002). Thus, the level of anxiety produced and emotional involvement fulfils Schein's (2004) second criteria. Finally, viewing and discussing the theatre performance is a communal activity and serves to bond the audience members together. Sharing the experience in a group creates a sense of psychological safety that meets Schein's (2004) third criteria. Therefore, Forum Theatre is an effective intervention vehicle to support the unfreezing stage of organisational change programs.

The decision to use organisation theatre and the particular form selected is typically determined by management who having identified a problem must decide whether drama can

contribute to its resolution (Meisiek, 2002). A key factor in this decision is the nature of the 'cathartic' effect being sought and the desired level of employee participation (Meisiek, 2002). The notion of catharsis in theatre has often been defined as 'signifying the power of theatre to change the minds *and* hearts of the audience' (Meisiek, 2004, p. 800). In addition, the role of the human body in the reception of theatrical performances is important and pinpoints the way in which catharsis involves cognition and emotion simultaneously (Meisiek, 2004).

The word 'catharsis' was invented by the ancient Greeks, was originally associated with medicine and can be roughly translated into the English word 'cleansing' (Meisiek, 2004). In contrast to Plato who saw theatre as nothing more than entertainment and the imitation of reality, Aristotle suggested tragic drama elicited the emotions of pity and fear in the audience and thus watching a performance released them from associated effects which he referred to as 'the cleansing of negative effects' (Meisiek, 2004). As a result, rather than suppressing or changing the source of uneasiness, catharsis serves to arouse and uncover the source of uneasiness so it can release the subject (Meisiek, 2004). The experience of catharsis enables the audience to experience the emotional journey of the characters they are watching without having to live the experience themselves. However, the theatre format where this form of catharsis is undertaken involved passive audiences rather than active ones and potentially aligns the audience to the norms and values being portrayed on stage. Therefore, the main effect of this first form of catharsis can be described as 'instilling compliance'.

In organisation theatre performances, the trend is towards more rather than less audience participation of which Boal's Forum Theatre is the most well-known example. In stark contrast to the cathartic release experienced by passive audiences watching Greek inspired drama, Forum Theatre is designed to motivate action amongst its active audience (spect-actors). The action is precipitated by the emotional dissonance created during the play and the interrogative format featuring the Joker. Both Boal and Brecht saw theatre as a

vehicle to promote social change (Boal, 2000; Brooker, 2006). However unlike Brecht who envisaged theatre would inspire critical reflection amongst audience members and initiate societal change, Boal aimed at the direct activation of the audience to produce a change of society as a whole (Meisiek, 2004). In order to produce this direct effect, Forum Theatre treats the audience as 'spect-actors' where they have the opportunity to both indirectly and directly intervene in reprises of the original staged play. Overall, this second form of catharsis can be termed 'action motivation' and has a medium level of audience participation through either direct involvement in the performance or indirectly through the second-order observation phenomenon.

The third form of catharsis used in theatre aims not to instil compliance or motivate action but instead create a connection between individuals and their self-understanding through 'creativity generation'. This form of catharsis is based on the work of Konstantin Stanislavsky, who developed the psychodynamic method of acting, and Jacob Moreno who developed the concept of psychodrama as group-focused theatre and therapy (Meisiek, 2004). In the psychodynamic method of acting, catharsis involves the reliving of past emotional experiences, whereby they lose their negative character. The focus on emotion is similar to Aristotle's concept of catharsis but instead of releasing the subject and instilling compliance, the emotional experiences provide a positive self-reinforcing loop of creativity generation (Meisiek, 2004). Thus catharsis is a generative rather than releasing process. In psychodrama, the performer acts out scenes from their past or imagination and with support from spectators, negative memories are moulded and new modes of action discovered (Moreno, 1946). Therefore, catharsis is the possibility of developing creativity, (particularly spontaneous action) by way of emotional processes (Meisiek, 2004). Moreno distinguished between three forms of catharsis: observation catharsis (similar to Aristotle's catharsis); action catharsis (the spontaneous interaction of the participants where the spectators effectively experience observation catharsis); and group catharsis (where the audience

actively interacts with the performers and the group experiences catharsis as a whole) (Meisiek, 2004). Therefore as with Stanislavsky's catharsis, Moreno's catharsis is a generative rather than releasing process. Finally, although psychodrama was developed as a therapeutic cathartic process, it has been adapted in a somewhat altered form (intensified role-play) to serve organisational needs (Meisiek, 2004).

### *Intensified Role-Play (Rehearse for Reality- Business Simulation)*

As a therapeutic method, psychodrama in its original form is not applicable to organisations so intensified role-play was developed to make managers more comfortable and efficient in their roles by creating positive social interactions and communication in the workplace (Meisiek, 2004). Rehearse for Reality is a form of intensified role-play where participants enter a dyadic role play with an actor while other participants watch. In some scenarios, the actor plays a feedback and coaching role whilst in others, a third person watches the interaction and provides feedback and coaching to the participant. Rehearse for Reality simulations are usually undertaken in groups of 5-6 people where each person takes a turn at practicing their skill while the rest of the group watch and provide feedback and support as appropriate. In contrast to traditional role-play business simulations where learners take on the roles of specific characters in a contrived setting, Rehearse for Reality participants play themselves in a realistic applied setting such as having a conversation with an employee. The intensified role-play in Rehearse for Reality combines creative catharsis (while the participant plays themself in the dyadic conversation with the actor) with observational catharsis (while watching other participants role play with the actor). Therefore, Rehearse for Reality is a powerful adaptation of psychodrama for use in organisations.

In Rehearse for Reality, a professional actor/coach gets the participant to describe in some detail the background, the conversation's purpose and personal characteristics of the individual the actor will play in the simulated conversation. Given their training in and skills at adopting a wide range of characters for theatre, the actor/coach is able to accurately portray

the conversational partner for the participant from both a cognitive and emotional perspective, making the conversation realistic and credible. Further, the actor is able to connect the emotion/motivation they display in the conversation to a value or belief the character they're playing holds and that participants need to address in order to achieve successful outcomes. During the course of the conversation, the actor/coach will periodically call time out, give the participant the opportunity to reflect on their perception of their ability to reach their purpose in the conversation, provide feedback on how their behaviour in the conversation is affecting them as the character and gain feedback from the group watching. Following this reflective practice, there is an opportunity for participants to experiment with different conversational approaches in the same way that Forum Theatre allows participants to suggest alternatives. Overall, Rehearse for Reality offers considerable scope for participants to experience creative catharsis that acts in a generative manner.

### *Playback Theatre*

Playback Theatre is an audience-interactive, improvisational theatre form in which audience members tell stories from their lives and then watch those stories enacted on stage (Fox & Dauber, 1999). In Playback Theatre, a conductor functioning as an emcee and trained interviewer invites audience members to come to the stage and tell stories of personal experience that are then enacted or "played back" by the improvisational actors and musicians (Salas, 1983). Developed in the mid-1970s, Playback Theatre has a variety of cultural and theatrical influences (including psychodrama) and aims to build community, share wisdom, and promote social change (Park-Fuller, 2003). Playback Theatre introduces participatory techniques designed to empower audience members in three ways: (1) report and articulate goals, values, and dreams; (2) experiment with strategies for solving problems; and (3) function as a challenge to dominant cultures (Haedicke & Nellhaus, 2001). Although psychodrama was overtly used in the creation of Playback Theatre, its credibility as a source of catharsis has been challenged (Nash, 1995; Rowe, 2006). Playback Theatre's format

provides a source of ‘passive’ catharsis that is localised in the spectator as opposed to ‘active’ catharsis that takes place in the subject (Moreno & Fox, 1987). Therefore, the audience at Playback Theatre partakes in observational rather than creative catharsis.

Playback Theatre has been widely used as a form of organisation theatre as “the Playback method is designed to get people talking as it is a compelling blend of facilitation, reflection, entertainment and learning” that is ideal for team building, training and for managing change (Sydney Playback Theatre Company, 2010). However, the Playback Theatre form both invites and discourages a methodological study of the effect on the audience (Park-Fuller, 2003). First, the blurring of roles in Playback Theatre changes the dynamic of performer-audience agency by radically revising the opportunities for community expression. Second, ritual structures create a safe, stable, and richly symbolic environment where creativity and spontaneity can function without chaos. Third, the participation of audience members as performers allows for multiple perspectives to be viewed enabling the potential to explore those accumulated insights. Finally, because Playback Theatre is a participatory, improvisational form, observer based evaluations can be deemed inappropriate as either the reviewer refused to participate and, therefore, did not experience the form as it is meant to be experienced, or the reviewer participated and, therefore, became one of the performers whose responses lack objectivity and therefore become suspect (Park-Fuller, 2003). Overall, Playback Theatre provides opportunities for passive catharsis, activation and multiple perspectives.

### *Entertainment Education*

Entertainment-education (E-E) is defined as the intentional placement of educational content in entertainment messages (typically radio or television serial dramas) and has been used extensively to promote public health and education (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). The use of dramatised serials gets viewers deeply emotionally engaged in, and identified with, the modelled characterisations that provide enabling guides and incentives for personal and social

change (Bandura, 2001). E-E's theoretical roots are in social cognitive theory with its focus on seeking to influence audience behavioural change by showing rather than describing positive and negative role models to the target audience (Singhal, 2004). E-E was pioneered by Miguel Sabido to counter widespread illiteracy in Mexico after a national self-instruction program produced a disappointing social response (Sabido, 1981). The vicarious motivators provided in this dramatic series depicted the substantial benefits of literacy both for personal development and for national efficacy and pride and drove a ninefold increase in literacy enrolment rates during the show's broadcast compared to the prior year (Bandura, 2001). As a result, E-E interventions have been undertaken in a number of developing countries as a cost-effective and influential means of addressing serious public health issues.

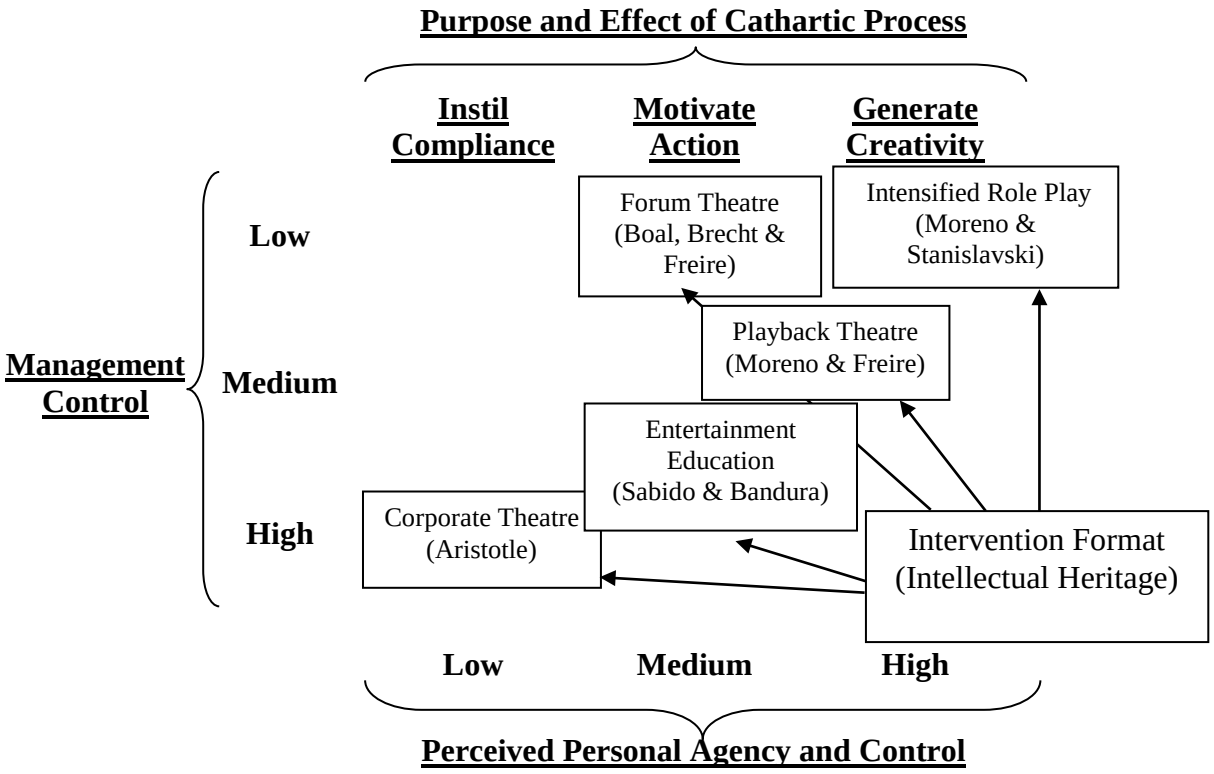
Although Bandura (1986) has demonstrated that observation of emotional responses by models induces a similar emotional state in observers as predicted by social cognitive theory, theories of individual behaviour are unable to capture the dynamics of social relationships, especially confrontation and conflict (Kincaid, 2002). It has been suggested that the drama theory and the convergence theory of communication explain how and why drama affects audience behaviour (Kincaid, 2002). By means of involvement and identification with the audience, the confrontation and emotional response of the characters in a drama generates a corresponding emotional response in the audience; the empathetic emotional response in the audience is the motivational force that induces them to reconceptualise the problem depicted in the drama and to resolve it in a similar manner in their own lives (Kincaid, 2002). Audience involvement is a critical facet of E-E as it acts as a precursor to increasing self-efficacy and in promoting interpersonal communication amongst individuals in the audience (Sood, 2002). In addition, audience identification with characters explained additional variation in the audience's behavioural intentions above and beyond that explained by perceived efficacy (Smith, Downs, & Witte, 2007). This unexpected finding is explained through transportation theory (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004) which posits that

being immersed in a narrative world allows audiences to vicariously experience feelings outside their normal boundaries of tolerance, often with cathartic visceral consequences that may generate intentions to avoid the character's mistakes but may not bolster the efficacy to carry out those intentions (Smith et al., 2007). Therefore, the optimal use of E-E requires effective modelling of appropriate behaviours and the creation of characters, narrative plot and dialogue that maximises audience involvement.

Although E-E is a non-participatory process, it shares several key characteristics with participatory theatre techniques used in organisation theatre. E-E and organisation theatre both use catharsis and vicarious experiences to engage their audiences and to generate action. Audiences become deeply emotionally engaged in and identify with the modelled characterisations that also provide enabling guides and incentives for both personal and social change. Both approaches also rely on the development of perceived efficacy as a mechanism to support behavioural change after the drama-based event is over. Indeed the parallels between E-E and Forum Theatre have been recognised with the prediction that future E-E interventions are likely to see more integration with participatory communication approaches for democratising organisations (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). Given the difficulties faced by participants seeking to adopt new behaviours on challenging tasks, Bandura (personal communication, August 2, 2007) suggested E-E can be used as a self-efficacy reinforcement mechanism for interventions such as Forum Theatre until new behaviours become habitual. Therefore, E-E can either be used directly as an intervention device to create organisational change or indirectly as a form of support for participatory organisation theatre interventions. In order to understand the various relationships between the different forms of organisation theatre intervention in terms of their cathartic effects, level of management control and level of personal agency and control, Figure XI places each of the forms in a matrix.

**Figure 2**

***Typology of Theatre-Based Training Interventions***




### *Relationship between Organisation theatre and Self-Efficacy*

The range of organisation theatre interventions described above clearly demonstrates how self-efficacy beliefs are enhanced. Forum Theatre acts as a mechanism to stimulate personal agency, a belief that the spect-actor can intentionally influence their environment. It also provides opportunities for spect-actors to learn vicariously. Similarly, intensive role play helps participants enhance perceptions of their self-efficacy through personal mastery, observational modelling and a feedback and coaching process. Finally, E-E acts as both a catalyst for personal agency and a device for learning vicariously. Therefore, organisation theatre interventions provide a rich source of opportunities to enhance self-efficacy beliefs.

# Methodology

## Background

My original research timetable and methodology was as follows:

2006 – First Semester – Undertake literature review

2006 – Second Semester – Develop research methodology

2007 – First Semester – Pre-test and pilot field experiment

2007 – Second Semester – Undertake field experiment

2008 – First Semester – Conclude field experiment

2008 – Second Semester – Analyse results

2009 – First Semester – Complete dissertation

This 'ideal scenario' timetable was designed to submit my PhD within the time that my APA scholarship ran but was contingent on recruiting a host organisation in a timely manner. My plan was to try and accomplish a major objective each semester while concurrently writing up relevant components of the dissertation. The field experiment was scheduled for a 12 month period from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 in order to provide a full year's worth of data. The recruitment of a host organisation took three months longer than I had originally anticipated so the field experiment began and finished three months later. In addition, I put my PhD on hold for six months in 2009 when I was offered the opportunity to teach at MGSM after a 10 year hiatus from teaching which I felt was an appropriate career move given I was approaching the final stages of my PhD. The final writing up phase of my PhD has taken six months longer than originally planned due to starting a two year contract as a Research Administrator at MGSM. In total, the PhD took 15 months longer overall due to the delay in host organisation recruitment and both short and medium term career development considerations.

## Host Organisation Recruitment

Once I discovered Organisation theatre provided an appropriate self-efficacy based intervention, I was faced with two major issues: financing the cost of the intervention and finding at least one suitable host organisation. With respect to financing the cost of the intervention, the HDR Director at MGSM recommended I investigate the possibility of accessing the Macquarie University External Collaborative Grant Scheme (MQECGS). The scheme provided matching funding to money that was contributed by external sources to undertake collaborative research with the potential to lead on to an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant project. Therefore, the MQECGS meant that the prospective cost of engaging actors for the intervention would be halved while concurrently opening up a long-term collaborative research opportunity. As a result, the cost per host organisation would be approximately $20,000, a relatively small amount for large corporations.

Based on the perceived impact of the Forum Theatre intervention on employee self-efficacy and performance at Division W, my aim was to recruit three companies to act as host organisations where customer service was seen as a key point of competitive differentiation. The proposed industries and job types were:

- Financial Services (frontline branch and contact centre employees)
- Retail (sales/service assistants and cashiers)
- Hospitality/Property (food and beverage servers and security officers)

As customer service processes operate in a similar fashion across industries, it would then be feasible to generalise the results elsewhere. Another factor favouring an intervention based on customer service was that it can be independently observed and measured from the customers point of view using techniques such as mystery shopping (Finn & Kayande, 1999). While customer service can be viewed as a global attitude, it can also be considered to be a competence to be developed and therefore an acquirable skill. These industries were also targeted because anecdotal evidence suggested employee motivation and performance were

concerns for employers as it had a detrimental impact on customer service. The job types nominated all involved direct customer interaction but there were a number of differences such as face to face vs. telecommunication format; transaction vs. sales oriented; and service vs. compliance driven. Finally, the perceived success of the Division W intervention as well as the potential leverage the research project had to the wider host organisation provided salient points as part of the 'sales pitch' to prospective host organisations.

I next contacted 12 major Australian based companies with whom I had senior management contacts to gauge their level of interest in and support for the proposed research (See Appendix XI for the host organisation recruitment template). A number of companies expressed interest in supporting the research but declined due to other priorities. Fortunately, two large Australian financial services companies (Bank G and Bank M) did indicate a willingness to become partners but the process wasn't as straightforward as I had hoped.

## Host Organisation One – Bank G

As I was completing my literature review and was beginning to plan my research methodology, I had the good fortune to meet Bank G's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at a function at which I was a co-host. During the evening I broadly outlined my research program to the CEO and they strongly encouraged me to contact Bank G's Human Resources (HR) Director when I was ready to proceed. Bank G's HR Director had a very strong academic background himself with several A* journal articles to his credit and he was also a colleague of a senior academic at MGSM. However, his initial email response was to decline the opportunity to meet and discuss my research project on the basis that Bank G was already supporting a self-efficacy research project and wished me good luck. However, as I was digesting his response, he sent another email minutes later stating that Bank G was interested in 'discretionary effort' – the popular term for employee engagement. My discussions with my MGSM colleague indicated that employee engagement was a hot button for Bank G so when I replied, I explicitly referred to the theoretical connection between self-efficacy and

employee engagement and suggested the proposed research would be very beneficial for gaining insight into the issue of discretionary effort. On this basis, he agreed to meet me and my PhD supervisor for lunch in February 2007.

At this point, my good fortune continued. During lunch time introductions, it emerged that my supervisor had been one of the HR Director's external PhD dissertation examiners and although they had never met previously, they had a numerous mutual colleagues. This connection broke the ice and over lunch it came to light that the HR Director had some familiarity with the use of actors in leadership development and could see how the project could potentially benefit Bank G generally as well as to address his particular interest in employee engagement. We identified an independent subsidiary of Bank G located in another Australian state (Bank S) was often used by Bank G for pilot studies and provided a suitable environment to undertake the research. Bank G also offered to pay the incremental travel costs associated with conducting the research interstate. The HR Director agreed to pass on the research proposal to the General Manager (GM) Learning & Performance (L&P) who reported directly to him and provided he thought the project had merit, agreed to contact Bank S's Managing Director (MD) to gain his support.

Fortunately, the GM L&P also had an academic background and had recently completed his doctorate. He was broadly interested in the impact the intervention would have on performance and suggested that the lack of confidence of branch employees at initiating proactive customer conversations was a highly plausible explanation for an identified performance issue at Bank S. However, the project's main appeal was that it would objectively evaluate a learning activity that would potentially demonstrate to senior management at Bank G that learning was both a good investment and a necessity. The GM L&P confirmed Bank G's financial support for the research and agreed to sponsor it with the Manager L&P and the GM HR at Bank S.

Although gaining the tangible support of both the HR Director and GM L&P was very encouraging, the decision to proceed needed the support of senior management at Bank S. In particular, gaining the support of the Operations team was pivotal as they would need to make their employees available for training and cope with any disruption the training activity might create within branches. Following an introductory meeting in Sydney with the Manager Learning & Performance from Bank S where the aims and structure of the research program were outlined, a teleconference was arranged with the GM HR to address likely concerns that would be raised by Bank S's MD and Operations team about the project when the GM HR presented it to them. These concerns included: likely impact on bottom line results; how the proposed training differed from other forms of learning/training; and whether the approach could be conducted in branches outside Bank S's 'Top 20' where a range of efforts targeted towards enhancing performance had already been undertaken. The teleconference discussion addressed those concerns and the GM HR subsequently received approval to proceed with the project subject to satisfying the Operations team that the training would not compromise Bank S's operational requirements.

A key factor in the decision to provisionally proceed was that the proposed training intervention provided a means for branch employees to overcome their lack of confidence at initiating proactive customer conversations. The reluctance of employees to initiate these conversations was seen to be an instrumental factor in causing the identified performance issue at Bank S. The background to the importance of this issue was that Bank S had the lowest product penetration ratio (average number of products per customer) of any of the major Australian banks. The strategy Bank S had adopted to increase its product penetration ratio was to develop deeper and more meaningful customer relationships so that when a customer was in the market for a new product, Bank S would be a preferred option in the customers consideration set. A key plank in the strategy was for branch employees to invite customers to attend a free and informative financial 'profiling' appointment with the

employee during the course of a regular over the counter (OTC) transaction. The main aim of the profiling appointment was to build trust with the customer and although product sales opportunities might be identified during the appointment, generating sales was not an explicit objective. In order to promote cross selling opportunities and monitor progress on building deeper customer relationships, Bank S had introduced a customer relationship management (CRM) system at their 112 branches three years earlier. A key feature of the CRM system was that it enabled branch employees to easily identify eligible customers for profiling appointments during OTC transactions. Employees were then supposed to use their discretion on how best to proactively ask the customer to attend a profiling appointment. Since the introduction of the CRM system, regular team meetings had been held to discuss the importance of this task and there had been a gradual increase in the number of appointments being made. The organisation also introduced an incentive system, which implied a 10% bonus for employees if pre-defined appointment targets were met.

In spite of the focus on profiling appointments and the incentive plan, appointment targets were not being met and so management initiated intensive in-house training programs and on-site coaching at their 'Top 20' branches (12 metropolitan and 8 regional) in the first half of 2007. Remedial work at these branches had been prioritised because they were the key profit contributors across the branch network but there was no plan in place to address this issue at the other branches. Therefore the GM HR and Manager L&P suggested that undertaking the research project in metropolitan 'mid-sized' branches was a viable option as they had been excluded previously. During a meeting with the two senior operations managers, they agreed there was a need for the training but that operational requirements would make it extremely difficult to release the target number of employees to attend two half-day training workshops. In order to break the proverbial Gordian knot, I asked if, cost considerations aside, whether they had ever contemplated conducting training on Saturdays when branches were closed and the operational impact would be zero. There were no

objections to the suggestion of Saturday morning training but there was significant scepticism about employee eagerness to attend paid training on a Saturday. Nevertheless, they agreed to gauge employee willingness to participate in the workshops which in fact turned out to be a strong preference for employees. Therefore, we were able to schedule and deliver two sets of workshops on Saturday as well as two sets of workshops during working hours on Wednesdays (the quietest day of the week operationally). With this last hurdle cleared, I gained the complete support of Company B management to undertake the research project.

### Host Organisation Two – Bank M

With respect to Bank M, I contacted a former MBA colleague and friend of mine who was the Head of Strategy (now Finance Director) to introduce me to an appropriate contact at Bank M that could be interested in the research project. He agreed to forward my proposal to relevant executives and several months later I had an email for the GM Sales & Service expressing interest in the project. Bank M had been consistently ranked as the worst performing major bank in Australia in terms of customer service and over the preceding two years had introduced programs to address customer service, sales, coaching and leadership. These programs were focused on helping all branch employees (branch managers, personal bankers, sales and service assistants and customer service managers) to develop better customer and employee connections, particularly as they related to managing and conducting the consultative selling process. However, the new programs weren't gaining the traction that had been hoped for and mystery shopping data had identified there were significant gaps in branch employees demonstrating desire for the business, follow up and asking for a customer's business. The sales and service team thought that lack of confidence in the new skills branch employees had been trained in was a key factor. This was a real concern as the sales and service team was charged with the responsibility of delivering improved sales results. Although the approved training programs that had been developed and delivered by Bank M's internal learning and development department had been well received by branch

employees, they had been ineffective at changing behaviours. Overall, the sales and service division thought the research project potentially offered a useful catalyst that could be rolled out across the branch network and therefore agreed to fund the project.

Based on discussions with Bank M about their branch structures and position descriptions, I requested that a minimum of three regions representing approximately 35 branches participate in the project. However, Bank M nominated only two, underperforming regions representing 24 branches. Branches from the regions were randomly assigned by Bank M into an experimental group (attend workshops and complete surveys) and a control group (surveys only). Employees were split into three groups: Branch Managers; Personal Bankers (including Business Bankers); and Customer Service Managers and Sales and Service Assistants with each group attending a one day workshop and a follow up half day workshop one month later. Although the overall content of the three workshops was similar and all used organisation theatre interventions, workshop sections were varied to reflect the new skills and behaviours specific to each of the job classifications with a particular focus on employee and customer connections. Thirty-four employees attending the first workshop but only 17 attended the second workshop due to a last minute decision by Bank M to change dates and venue for the training. The low numbers in the second workshop severely compromised the project as it made undertaking a statistically valid analysis of the surveys and other measures very difficult. Therefore, the rest of the methodology section, journal articles, conclusion and appendices refer only to Bank S. A report issued to Bank M summarising key findings of the research project can be found in Appendix V.

## Development of Survey Instrument

### *Qualitative Stage – July 2007*

Bank S's learning and development team provided a range of human resources materials as evidence of the competencies required in each of the job roles. This material provided background information for use in developing a survey instrument, particularly in

relation to the core tasks employees undertook in their roles. In addition, Bank S had produced a DVD that was played at one of their regular weekly staff meetings that was designed to provide encouragement for employees to make profiling appointments and featured an interview with Bank S's MD talking about the importance of profiling appointments to Bank S's strategy. At Bank S, there were three job classifications at branch level for mid-sized branches: Branch Manager (BM); Senior Customer Service Officer (Senior CSO); and Customer Service Officer (CSO). BM's and Senior CSO's were employed on a full-time basis while CSO's were employed on either a full-time or part-time basis. In order to gain a better understanding of employee perspectives with regards to proactive customer conversations generally as well as asking customers to attend the branch for a profiling appointment specifically, interviews with a cross section of branch level employees was undertaken. In all interviews were conducted with three BM's, two senior CSO's and three CSO's. In addition, two regional supervisors were interviewed to get a broader perspective on challenges faced by branch employees. The interviews were semi-structured and included questions such as:

How much and what type of training did you receive when you first started?

How much and what type of training have you received in the past 3 years?

How much has your role or expectations of your role changed in the past 3 years?

How well has the training you've received helped you to perform your job?

In what ways has the training you've received given you confidence to perform your job?

Are there any work factors that have limited your belief in your ability to do your job?

Any suggestions to increase your beliefs in your ability to perform your job effectively?

Overall, do you believe you have the skills, knowledge and ability to perform your role?

To what extent to do you believe you have control over your work?

To what extent to do you believe you have the competence to perform your role?

To what extent do you believe that your work related efforts will lead to good outcomes?

The interviews confirmed management conjecture that branch-level employees lacked confidence at initiating proactive conversations and asking customers to attend their branch for a profiling appointment. Employees believed they had good technical skills, provides good customer service and responded appropriately to customer queries and requests. However, a number of employees felt that being proactive was an invasion of the customers' privacy and overly 'sales' focused. In addition, some employees commented that they were 'fearful' of initiating conversations with customers that were not directly related to the transaction for which the customer was attending the branch. In one case, a Senior CSO commented that she had not joined the bank to be a sales person and that her forte was handling daily transactions, ensuring compliance matters were handled correctly and responding to customer requests for information or providing new products. Overall the interviews reinforced management's view that lack of confidence and fear were undermining branch employees' ability to initiate proactive customer conversations.

***Quantitative Stage – August and September 2007***

The information from the qualitative stage was then used as input to the development of the survey instrument. In early 2007, I submitted papers to the annual Academy of Management and American Sociological Association conferences outlining my proposed research methodology that were subsequently both accepted (See Appendices I and II respectively). In addition to receiving feedback from other delegates at the conferences about my proposed methodology, I used this opportunity to seek input from two leading academics regarding the methodology I was adopting as well as getting specific support with developing the survey measures. I first contacted Professor Albert Bandura from Stanford University and requested a meeting with him on my way to the conferences. He agreed to meet and was very generous with his time and insights. During our meeting he gave me a copy of his Guide for

Constructing Self-Efficacy scales that he believed would provide me with the template I needed to create the task-specific scales for Bank S employees. He stressed the importance of developing scales that were specific to the designated tasks. In addition, after describing to Professor Bandura the Forum Theatre process that formed the foundation of the intervention, he said that it reminded him of the serial drama format used in 'Entertainment-Education' described earlier in the Literature Review section. I mentioned to Professor Bandura that Bank S had the capacity to show DVD's to their employees and he recommended developing a mini-serial drama using the original Forum Theatre characters as a 'booster shot' for employees in order to help them build resilience and sustain their efforts in adopting the new behaviours. Overall this meeting was instrumental in giving me the tools I needed to create the self-efficacy component of the survey and added a step to the methodology that would maximise the impact of the training intervention.

Second, my PhD Supervisor contacted Professor Sharon Parker, the Director of the Institute of Work Psychology (IWP) at the University of Sheffield and enquired about the possibility of me spending time at IWP to develop appropriate measures for the project. Professor Parker kindly agreed so I spent one week at the Institute after the two conferences. During that time I worked closely with Professor Parker to better articulate the theoretical model I had developed and select appropriate measures to test the model. Professor Parker was a leading authority on role breadth self-efficacy, flexible role orientation and proactive behaviour that were directly relevant to this study. During the week I spent in Sheffield, I accessed the book 'Taking the Measure of Work: a guide to validated scales for organizational research and diagnosis' (Fields, 2002) as a source of scales to identify possible mediators and moderators of the relationship between self-efficacy, employee engagement and work-related performance. I chose five of these scales (Non-Controlling Supervision; Job Stress; Role Overload; Perceived Organisational Support; and Work Control) for the first survey. Professor Parker also provided draft scales for the flexible role orientation and role

performance measures as well as the employee acting scale. Finally I identified nine other valid and reliable scales (Self-Esteem; Self-Categorization; General Self-Efficacy; Abbreviated Big Five Inventory; Locus of Control; Satisfaction with Life; Perspective Taking; Integrated Understanding; and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale) from journal articles (and one book) to be used in the pre-intervention survey. Appendix XIII contains a complete list of scales and their sources.

My initial target was to survey 320 employees with half (160) attending training and the other half acting as a control group. Based on groups of new (less than 1 year) and existing employees in two different job classifications, I divided this target into four cells of 80 people each. However, discussions with Bank S indicated operational requirements made it virtually impossible to release the target number of employees for training. Due to logistical constraints at Bank S as well as possible spill-over effects between branch level personnel attending workshops and viewing the entertainment education reinforcement in teams, the decision was made to train all employees from a selection of nominated branches rather than randomly selecting employees from all mid-sized branches across the network. As a result, the intervention was really a quasi-experimental design rather than a true experimental one. Therefore, we agreed to focus on 20 mid-sized branches where approximately 60 employees from 10 branches would complete surveys and attend the workshops. Another 60 employees from 10 other midsized branches would serve as a control group by completing the same surveys as workshop participants. Pairs of branches were initially selected based on their geographically proximity to each other as a first step in the assignment process. The branch pairs were then evaluated based on the demographic profile of their customers including whether the branch had a ‘deposit taking’ or ‘loan granting’ focus. Several branch pairs were re-assigned based on these criteria. Once 10 pairs of broadly equivalent branches were agreed on, they were then randomly assigned to either a ‘Pilot’ (intervention) or ‘Control’ (no intervention) group. The pilot group participated in the

Organisation theatre intervention and completed surveys while the control group only completed surveys. On a post-hoc basis, the 'equivalency' of the pilot and control groups was checked by comparing the means across all survey items including demographic data. Overall the control group had a slightly higher proportion of managers than the pilot group. Conversely, the pilot group has a slightly more CSO's with less tenure. The difference between the groups was reflected in T-tests between the groups which showed that for items requiring more technical skill and experience, the control scored significantly higher than the pilot group. Altogether the control group rated themselves as more self-efficacious than the pilot group on 3 of the 10 self-efficacy items at Time 1 that were asked both pre and post the intervention as well as 1 of the 10 self-efficacy items at Time 2 that were asked both pre and post the intervention. With respect to the psychometric variables, there was only 1 scale (Role Performance) that showed a statistically significant difference between the pilot and control group at Time 1 with the control group rating themselves as being slightly more performance oriented than the pilot group. In order to control for these differences, only respondents who had at least 6 quarters of performance data were included in any statistical analyses between the groups that assessed the effect of any psychometric variable or self-efficacy on performance. This control filter reduced the 'n' significantly but ensured that the groups were as equivalent as possible for analysis purposes.

Participants from each branch included all three job categories: BM (1); Senior CSO (1); and SCO (4)[1]. Both groups completed online surveys one week prior to the first workshop and two months after the intervention finished. Table 4 provides demographic information about the pilot and control groups on both surveys.

[1] Although CSO's perform the majority of customer interactions, Managers and Supervisors roles include undertaking CSO daily duties and are therefore also responsible to make appointments during OTC transactions.

**Table 4**

***Participant Profiles***

| **Job Classification** | **Manager** | **Supervisor** | **Frontline** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Pre/Post) | 18/13 | 19/13 | 61/32 | | |
| **Employment Conditions** | **Full-time** | **Part-time** | | | |
| (Pre/Post) | 35/25 | 63/33 | | | |
| **Length Of Employment** | **< 1 Year** | **1-5 Years** | **6-10 Years** | **11-20 Years** | **>20 Years** |
| (Pre/Post) | 21/11 | 40/24 | 9/4 | 14/10 | 14/9 |

The first stage involved a half day workshop centred on the use of Forum Theatre. Participants were presented four pre-scripted scenes that narrated the story of a normal working day in the life of three branch employees. The play was set in a fictional branch and the content built on issues related to challenges faced by employees with the customer profiling process. Each scene addressed some of the concerns related to the Company's strategic focus on building customer relationships, and in particular, any constraints felt by employees to encourage conversations that could lead to a profiling appointment. The actors first presented the scenes as one piece of play, with a narrator (consultant) linking the scenes. Afterwards the actors replayed each scene and invited the spect-actors (employees) to probe different aspects of the presented scene. The employees were divided into groups and asked to identify and discuss key issues as well as define character motivation, behaviour, perspective and intent. The outcomes were later presented to and discussed between all participants. Following the Forum Theatre intervention, time was allocated for structured reflection and the development of goal oriented personal action plans. To help participants in this process, an audience member was first invited to come 'on stage' and share a personal issue. The audience was asked to offer solutions to these issues and help conquer the concerns described by the participant. The group was next split into three breakout areas where actor/facilitators led each group through a discussion and practice session on how to

address the identified challenges. Finally, the full group reconvened and participants were asked to discuss in pairs how they would apply what they had learned.

One month after the first workshop, a second half day workshop was held that again started with a short piece of Forum Theatre that depicted a different scene featuring customer dialogues that didn't involve interactions with employees. The main aim was to offer different perspectives on what customers might be thinking. Afterwards, the audience were asked to comment and discuss the presented scene. The main focus of the second workshop however was built around 'Rehearse for Reality' in order to give participants the opportunity to practice proactive customer conversations. For this section, participants were divided into smaller groups, where they had to deliver customer-profiling scenarios with the actors/facilitators playing the customers and the participants playing themselves. During each of the actor/employee dyads, the other participants had the opportunity to learn vicariously as well as make suggestions.

Given the difficulties typically faced by participants adopting new behaviours on challenging tasks, I adopted Professor Bandura's recommendation and added a third component based on 'Entertainment Education' (E-E) principles. The learning consultants created a three part DVD series that was shown to participants four months after the second workshop. The DVD's showed the three characters from the Forum Theatre scenes exploring proactive customer conversation issues but in a different setting to the workshops. Each DVD segment was played once only at the start of each branches regular weekly team meeting over three consecutive weeks and was followed by a discussion led by either the manager or senior CSO. Prior to the DVD being released to branches, a two hour mini workshop was held either a BM or Senior CSO from each pilot group branch explaining the DVD's purpose, showing the DVD and having a general discussion regarding the best ways to facilitate its introduction and use with branch employees. An instruction guide was included to help

branch managers and senior CSO's lead discussions amongst branch employees as well as suggesting questions and potential issues for discussion.

Two months after the DVD series was shown and one week before the post-intervention survey was posted online, a proposed corporate merger was announced by the host organisation with a larger Australian financial services organisation. The proposed merger created a degree of uncertainty for branch employees as this was the third 'merger' many employees had been through in the past decade. Both online surveys and focus groups conducted by the host organisation showed significant employee disenchantment. Although the research design used specifically catered for environmental influences in order to isolate the effect from the OT intervention, response rates for the post-intervention survey were significantly lower than the pre-intervention survey. The uncertainty created by the proposed merger also had an impact on select measures as shall be seen later.

101 employees completed the pre-intervention survey and 64 completed the post-intervention one. Of the 56 employees who completed both the pre and post intervention surveys, there was no statistical difference between the groups with respect to their employment classification (full-time or part-time), job classification (CSO, Supervisor or Manager) or length of employment. Figure 3 outlines the timeline for the intervention.

**Figure 3**

***Intervention and Performance Measurement Timeline***

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Group:** | **Pilot & Control** | **Pilot Only** | **Pilot Only** | **Pilot & Control** | **All** |
| **Quarter:** | **Q4 (End)** | **Q5 (Early)** | **Q6 (Mid)** | **Q7 (Late)** | **Q8** |
| **Activity:** | Pre-Intervention Survey | Workshops 1 & 2 (Half Day) | DVD's Introduced | Post-Intervention Survey | Final Data Collection |
| **Mystery Shopping:** | (Pre-workshop 1) | (Post-workshop 2) | (Pre-DVD's) | (Post-DVD's) | |

**Corporate Merger Announcement**

## Measures

Appendix XIV - XVI contains copies of the three surveys used at Bank S. The pre-intervention survey was conducted in 2 parts. Part 1 contained 100 items from 17 psychometric scales. Part 2 contained 21 single-level self-efficacy items for CSO's and 31 single-level self-efficacy items for Senior CSO's and BM's. There were also 21 single-level collective efficacy items for all three job classifications in Part 2. The post-intervention survey contained 65 items from 10 of the 17 psychometric scales from the pre-intervention survey and 4 items from one new psychometric scale. In addition, there were 10 single-level self-efficacy items and 7 multiple-level self-efficacy items for all job classifications as well as 7 multiple-level self-efficacy items for Senior CSO's and BM's.

### *Measures of how employees see their work environment and their job*

Five measures concerned employees' jobs and their work environment. They were scored with 7-point Likert scales that were converted from 5-point Likert scales where necessary. The scales used were: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree.

1. *Non-Controlling Supervision* was assessed using all four items from Oldham & Cummings' (1996) measure of this variable ($\alpha$ = .58, Pre-intervention only). The items assessed the extent to which employees felt their supervisors controlled their work. Three of the four items were reverse scored. An example item was "My supervisor never gives me a chance to make important decisions on my own".
2. *Job Stress* was assessed using three of the five items in the anxiety sub-scale from Parker and Decotiis' (1983) measure of this variable ($\alpha$ = .86 Pre and Post intervention). The items assessed the extent that employees felt their jobs were stressful. An example item was "My job gets to me more than it should".

3. *Role Overload* was assessed using all three items from Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley's (1990) measure of this variable (α = .73, Pre-intervention only). The words 'allocated tasks' were substituted for 'job'. The items assessed the extent that employees felt they didn't have time to do their allocated tasks properly. One item was reverse scored. An example item was "I don't have time to finish my job".
4. *Perceived Organisational Support* was assessed using the four highest loading items from Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sows's (1985) shortened measure of this variable (α = .82 Pre-intervention & .84 Post-intervention). The items assessed the extent which employees felt Bank S cared about them. One item was reverse scored. An example item was "Bank SA cares about my general satisfaction at work".
5. *Work Control* was assessed using the four highest loading items from Dwyer and Ganster's (1991) measure of this variable (α = .85, Pre-intervention only). The wording was modified from question to statement format for consistency purposes with other items. The items assessed the extent to which employees felt they had control over their work methods. An example item was "I have a lot of control over the variety of methods I use in completing my work".

***Measures of how employees see themselves***

Six measures concerned employee perceptions of themselves. They were scored with 7-point Likert scales that were converted from 5-point scales where necessary. The scales were: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree.

6. *Self-Esteem* was assessed using the four highest loading items from Rosenberg's (1979) measure of this variable (α = .70 Pre-intervention and α = .74 Post-intervention). The items assessed how employees felt about

themselves. Two items were reverse scored. An example item was "I feel I have a number of good qualities".

7. *Self-Categorisation* was assessed using all three items from Ellemers, Kortekaas, and Ouwerkerk's (1999) measure of this variable (α = .53 Pre-intervention only). The scale was modified from "1 = not at all to 7 = very much" to the same scale as the other items for consistency. The items assessed the extent to which employees identified with other members of the branch. Two items were reverse scored. An example item was "My branch is an important reflection of who I am".
8. *General Self-Efficacy* was assessed using all three items from Chen, Gully, and Eden's (2001) measure of this variable (α = .91 Pre and Post-intervention). The items assessed the extent to which employees believed they could succeed in achieving goals they had set for themselves. An example item was "In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me".
9. *Individual Differences* was assessed using all eleven items from Rammstedt and John's (2007) measure of this variable (α = .52 to .64 Pre-intervention only). The items assessed the Big 5 personality traits (Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience). With the exception of Agreeableness which had three items, the other scales had two items. For each scale there was one reverse item. An example item was "I see myself as someone who…….is outgoing, sociable". N.B. The α co-efficient for Openness to Experience was .007 and this measure was dropped from further analysis.
10. *Locus of Control* was assessed using all six items from Lumpkin's (2007) measure of this variable (α = .62 Pre-intervention and α = .67 Post-intervention). The items assessed the extent employees believed they had

control over their lives. An example item was "When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work".

11. *Satisfaction with Life* was assessed using all five items from Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin's (1985) measure of this variable (α = .91 Pre-intervention and α = .88 Post-intervention). The items assessed the extent to which employees were satisfied with their lives. An example item was "In most ways my life is close to ideal".

***Measures of how employees see customers***

Five measures concerned employee perceptions of customers. They were scored with 5-point Likert scales. The scale on the first measure was: 1 = definitely not my concern; 2 = might be my concern; 3 = somewhat my concern; 4 = probably my concern; 5 = definitely my concern. The scale for the other four measures was: 1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal.

12. *Flexible Role Orientation* was adapted from ten items from Parker, Williams and Turner's (2006) measure of this variable (α = .85 Pre-intervention and α = .95 Post-intervention). The items assessed the extent to which employees saw being proactive with customers was part of their job. An example item was "A customer who has previously dealt with your colleague needs help".
13. *Role Performance* was assessed using six items from Griffin, Neal and Parker's (2007) measure of proactive and task performance and four items from Rank, Carsten, Unger, and Spector's (2007) measure of customer performance (α = .89 Pre-intervention and α = .91 Post-intervention). The items assessed the extent to which employees felt they were performing their core tasks, were proactive in their roles and with customers. An example item was "Ensured all your activities were completed properly".

14. *Employee Acting* was assessed using six items from Grandey's (2003) measure of this variable (α = .91 Pre-intervention and α = .93 Post-intervention). The items assessed the extent to which employees felt they pretended to show their emotions or actually tried to experience their emotions. An example item was "Work hard to feel the emotions that you need to show to customers".
15. *Integrated Understanding* was assessed using six items from Parker and Axtell's (2001) measure of this variable (α = .86 Pre-intervention only). The items assessed the extent to which employees had a broad understanding of the services provided by their company. An example item was "Do you understand how your department as a whole works".
16. *Perspective Taking* was assessed using six items from Parker and Axtell's (2001) measure of this variable (α = .98 Post-intervention only). The items assessed the extent to which employees were able to see things from the customers' perspective. An example item was "Try to imagine yourself as a customer in a similar situation".

### *Measures about how employees feel at work*

One measure concerned employee perceptions of how felt when they were at work. They were scored with a unique 6-point Likert scale. The scale was: 0 = Never; 1 = Almost Never ( a few times a year or less); 2 = Rarely (once a month); 3 = Sometimes (a few times a month or less); 4 = Often (once a week); 5 = Very Often (a few times a week); 6 = Always (every day).

17. *Engagement* was assessed using the recommended nine items in the short version of the 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova's (2006) (α = .90 Pre-intervention and α = .94 Post-intervention). The items assessed how employees felt at work. An example item was "I feel happy when I am working intensely".

### *Measuring self-efficacy*

There are several approaches to the measurement of self-efficacy (Gecas, 1989). These measures typically use self-reporting psychometric instruments. For example, Bandura (1997) focuses on task-specific measures that relate to the competency or skill to the task at hand and are not intended to be a general measure of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) recommends conducting interviews with people for whom the domain of interest is relevant. In addition, self-efficacy measures should be designed to capture the multi-faceted nature of behaviour and the context in which it occurs (Maddux & Gosselin, 2003). One such measure is the Health Locus of Control Scale (Wallston, Wallston, Kaplan, & Maides, 1976) which measures control orientations specific to the health area. Other scales have been developed to measure an individual's general sense of personal mastery and self-efficacy (Chen, 2001; Gecas, 1971; Pearlin, 1983; Sherer & et al., 1982).

There has been considerable debate about the appropriate format to measure self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Judge, Jackson, Shaw, Scott, & Rich, 2007; Lee & Bobko, 1994; Maurer & Pierce, 1998). Bandura (1997) advocates using the 100 point Grid system where respondents are asked to indicate on a scale of 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) their level of confidence (strength) in undertaking the described task at each stated performance level. Nevertheless, in spite of Bandura's undoubted expertise in this domain, over half the number of correlations analysed in the meta-analysis by Judge et al (2007) used Likert scales to assess the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance while Likert scales are the dominant format certain disciplinary areas such as marketing (Chowdhury, 1993; Jones, 1986; Spreitzer, 1995). However, when individual differences such as ability were taken into account, the Grid system of measuring self-efficacy was found to be a significant predictor of work-related performance whereas Likert scales were not (Judge et al., 2007). This finding suggests that the Grid format is superior to Likert scales where the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship is the focus of attention.

A common issue in both scale formats is range restriction as respondents tend to rate themselves as highly self-efficacious at normal performance levels. The resulting highly skewed negative distribution hampers analysis. For example, the mean in one study was 6.29 on a 7-point scale (Rank, Carsten, Unger, & Spector, 2007). To address this issue, Bandura (1997) recommends measuring self-efficacy strength at six performance levels of increasing difficulty (from very easy to very hard). The top and bottom responses are then dropped and a composite measure for a specific task is computed from the remaining four responses (Lee & Bobko, 1994). These composite, strength based self-efficacy scores provide the most accurate performance predictors (Bandura, 1997).

*Task-specific self-efficacy.* Based on a review of employee job descriptions, branch level employee interviews and discussions with management, 21 tasks directly related to the CSO role were identified as well as 10 tasks for each of the Senior CSO and BM roles. For example, tasks related to behaviours associated with making appointments with customers during over-the-counter interactions were identified and made up the self-efficacy measure 'Make appointments SE'. This item asked respondents to "Think about your ability right now to ask customers to come in for a profiling appointment during an over the counter transaction when there's a long queue. How certain are you about how often you can do so?" A second item related to behaviours associated with asking customers for their business where a clear need had been identified and made up the self-efficacy measure 'Ask for business SE'. This item asked respondents to "Think about your ability right now to ask an open-ended question during an interaction with a customer. How certain are you about how_often you can do so?" These items were directly related to the two critical performance measures: 'Make appointments SE' corresponded to 'Appointments made'; and 'Ask for business SE' corresponded to 'Products sold'. All respondents (CSO's, Senior CSO's and BM's) completed the 21 items that related to the CSO role.

In the pre-intervention survey respondents were asked to rate their confidence at a single level of performance. This approach was taken so that exploratory factor analysis could be used to group these 21 tasks into Domain Self-Efficacy factors. In addition, this process highly skewed tasks with limited dispersion from those where there was greater variation in confidence to be identified. The most highly skewed tasks were dropped for the post-intervention survey while the tasks with lower means and higher variability were re-formatted into the six stated performance levels in line with Bandura's (1997) recommendations. Composite measures of task-specific self-efficacy were then calculated.

*Domain Self-Efficacy*. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the 21 tasks yielded a five factor, Domain model of self-efficacy. The dominant factor (Appointment SE) comprised 6 of the 21 items, had an initial Eigenvalue of 9.3 and explained 42.7% of the variance. The other four factors with initial Eigenvalues over 1.0 were: Service SE (3 items); Sales SE (6 items); System SE (4 items); and Conversation SE (2 items) and explained an additional 27.5% of the variance, a total of 70.2%. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) value was .86, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1970) with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reaching statistical significance. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then performed for each of the five factors with their respective items revealed by the EFA using Principal Axis Factoring and Direct Oblimin rotation with a cut-off of 0.3. The CFA showed each of the five factors loaded onto a single factor with satisfactory KMO and Bartlett values. The initial Eigenvalues (explained variance percentage) for each of the five factors using CFA was: (1) Appointment SE = 4.0 (66.6%); (2) Service SE = 2.4 (60.6%); Sales SE = 3.4 (67.3%); Conversation SE = 1.5 (72.3%); and System SE = 2.8 (69.2%).

*Composite Self-Efficacy*. The means of the 21 Task SE items ranged from 83.2 to 99.2 with skewness ranging from -3.03 to -.84. Seven composite measures were developed for the seven items in the CSO role with the lowest means and greatest skewness. For each of these seven items, six performance levels were created with increasing degrees of difficulty from

very easy to very hard. The two key Composite SE items were (1) Making appointments with customers during an OTC Transaction (Making Appointments SE) and (2) Asking customers for their business where a clear need had been identified (Ask for Business SE). These two predictor variables were directly related to the two critical performance measures: 'Number of Appointments Made' and 'Number of Products Sold' respectively. Explanatory factor analysis on all seven items yielded a two factor model for each: Hard (3 items) and Easy (3 items). For example, the 'Making Appointments Hard' item had an initial Eigenvalue of 4.5 and explained 76% of the variance while 'Ask for Business Hard' item had an initial Eigenvalue of 3.5 and explained 59% of the variance. The CFA's for 'Making Appointments Hard' and 'Ask for Business Hard' had KMO values of .70 and .62 respectively and the Bartlett value was statistically significant.

Both Bandura's recommended approach (drop top and bottom performance levels) and the factor analysis approach yielded statistically significant relationships between self-efficacy and work-related performance. However, the correlations (Make appointments - Hard = .425, p=0.003 and Ask for business - Hard = .440, p=0.002) between self-efficacy using the 'hard' factors and their respective performance measures were stronger than the correlations (Make appointments - 4 levels = .389, p=0.007 and Ask for business - 4 levels = .295, p=0.032) using Bandura's recommended approach. Therefore, the mean scores for the three levels constituting the hard factor for both 'Make appointments SE' and for 'Ask for business SE' were used to test self-efficacy's relationship with work-related performance and other variables in the study.

*Role Breadth Self-Efficacy (RBSE).* RBSE refers to the employee's perceived capability to carry out a range of proactive, interpersonal, and integrative activities that extend beyond the technical core (Parker et al., 2006). The RBSE composite measure was the mean of the seven Composite SE 'Hard' measures. These items came from three of the five self-efficacy Domains: Asking Open-ended Questions (Conversation SE); Making an

Appointment, Appointment Benefit and Telephone Appointment (Appointment SE); and Product Opportunities, Product Recommendations and Ask for Business (Sales SE) and therefore provided a suitable, composite cross-domain measure of RBSE. The RBSE measure captured the organization's overall objectives for the expanded role employees were expected to undertake as part of its focus on building deeper relationships with customers. The CFA for RBSE had a KMO value of .72 and the Bartlett value was statistically significant.

*Work-related Performance:* The host organisation's CRM system provided individual-level data on appointment related factors and sales (both number and value). The CRM system was introduced three years prior to the field study as a vehicle to track employee performance and support the organisation's strategic focus on building customer relationships that ultimately lead to increased sales and profitability. The CRM system collects over 200 individual employee performance variables on a quarterly basis. The host organisation's management closely monitored three performance variables: Number of appointments made; Number of leads generated; and Number of products sold. Achieving the targets set for the first variable was seen to be within the control of frontline employees as part of their day to day roles and responsibilities whereas the last two variables were viewed as being a function of the first one and therefore, directly proportional. A total of 384 Excel files (32 branches for 12 Quarters) were downloaded from the CRM system and there were 691 employees in those files with at least one quarter of performance data recorded. The formatting of the files made importing the data into SPSS for analysis impossible as a short to medium term option for data analysis. To further complicate matters, a substantial number of staff had been deployed in multiple branches over the 12 quarters that the data was collected. Therefore, I had to create an Excel spread sheet with 18 variables (the above three factors and 15 other performance measures such as the number and value of financial products sold) for all branch staff who had worked at the host organization for both the one year in which the study was carried out as well as for the immediately preceding year in the same branch. Using these

criteria enabled all employees to have had at least one year's frontline experience before being expected to ask customers proactively to attend financial health check appointments. An exploratory factor analysis of these 18 measures consistently found one dominant performance factor with an initial Eigenvalue over 12 that explained over 60% of the variance as well as two factors with initial Eigenvalues just over 1.0. These latter two factors represented the specialized categories of Wealth and Other Products that were not typically sold by respondents whereas the main product categories (i.e. home loans, personal loans, and credit cards) were included within the dominant performance factor. A confirmatory factor analysis of the three key performance variables found a single performance factor that accounted for 92% of variance with KMO values ranging from .78 to .83 with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reaching statistical significance.

*Customer Experience*. A range of studies suggest mystery shoppers provide reliable ratings of the performance of retail outlets (Finn & Kayande, 1999). Anonymous mystery shoppers posing as customers provided an indirect means of measuring the effects of the OT intervention on performance. Mystery shoppers visited all 20 branches on four occasions: Pre first workshop (Sept 2007); Post second workshop (Nov 2007); Pre-DVD showing (Feb 2008); and Post-DVD showing (May 2008). Twenty service standards (including offering the customer the opportunity to make a profiling appointment) were objectively evaluated by shoppers using Yes/No criteria (i.e. the employee asked a specific question or demonstrated a specific skill) and a weighted total score was calculated. Due to the bank's customer service process at branches, mystery shoppers' evaluations at Pilot Group branches were not exclusively handled by participants in the OT intervention. Therefore, the mystery shopper evaluations provided only an indicative measure of customer experience.

## Publications

The next section includes the three papers that form the core of this thesis. Paper 1 has been prepared for submission to the Journal of Organisational Behaviour, an A* journal. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the International Human Resource Management conference in Birmingham in June 2010. Papers from the conference were eligible for consideration in a special issue of the International Journal of HRM (an A journal). However, I have withheld submitting the updated version of the paper to IHHRM until my thesis was completed. I wrote Paper 1 exclusively with extensive input from my associate supervisor, Dr Paul Nesbit as well as informal feedback from Professor Sharon Parker.

Paper 2 has been through the review process at Human Resource Management (an A Journal) and is awaiting a decision by the editor. This paper was originally presented at the International Network of Business and Management (INBAM) in Valencia in June 2010 where the Editor and Associate Editor from HRM adjudicated a stream of paper presentations. I wrote Paper 2 exclusively with informal feedback from Dr Paul Nesbit and Professor Robin Kramar.

Paper 3 was originally written with the aim of being submitted to a special issue of Administrative Science Quarterly (an A* journal) on 'Social Psychological Perspectives on Power and Hierarchy'. I wrote several drafts exploring the use of organisation theatre as a mechanism for change in organisational power and hierarchy before settling on the focus contained in the current paper in consultation with my principal supervisor Professor Richard Badham. Professor Badham was primarily responsible for writing the introduction, literature review and conclusion, Linda Matula wrote the original case study and I was primarily responsible for writing the measures and results sections as well as overall editorial control.

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# Paper 1

## Assessing the Influence of Self-Efficacy and Employee Engagement on Actual Performance in an Organizational Setting


### *ABSTRACT*

To address the dearth of self-efficacy/work-related performance studies undertaken in real work settings, the relationships between self-efficacy, employee engagement and performance were explored in a longitudinal study of employees in a financial services firm. Survey data (n=64) measuring task-specific self-efficacy, general self-efficacy and employee engagement was matched against objective quarterly performance data obtained from the host organization's CRM system. The study found there were strong and significant relationships between task-specific self-efficacy, employee engagement and actual work-related performance. After controlling for past performance, regression analysis showed task-specific self-efficacy and employee engagement acted as independent predictors of actual work-related performance whereas the introduction of general self-efficacy did not add predictive validity. The study found employee engagement's affective component was a primary factor in explaining additional variance in performance. These findings confirm the importance of task-specific self-efficacy in actual work-related performance in an organizational setting and suggest employee engagement is an important new construct for practitioners and organization scholars to consider in work-related performance evaluations.



**Keywords:** Self-Efficacy; Employee Engagement; Work-Related Performance

## *INTRODUCTION*

Self-efficacy refers to people's judgment of their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands (Bandura, 1986, p. 700). The widespread popularity of self-efficacy as a research topic is evidenced by the nearly 3,000 studies initially identified by the authors of two meta-analyzes of self-efficacy and work-related performance as potentially being eligible for inclusion (Judge et al., 2007; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). It is a topic of significant inquiry by management scholars as a key word search of 'self-efficacy' and 'business' on questia.com (September 28, 2010) found nearly 1200 articles where both these terms were mentioned, suggesting self-efficacy has fulfilled the assertion that it would be "the wave of the future" (p. 410) in work motivation research (Landy, 1989, p. 410). Researchers have been particularly interested in the relationship between self-efficacy and a range of behavioral outcomes such as idea generation (Gist, 1989), burnout (Maslach, 2001), decision making (Wood, Bandura, & Bailey, 1990), proactive behavior (Parker et al., 2006) and escalation situations (Whyte & Saks, 2007). In general these studies have found a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and behavioral outcomes including work-related performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

Notwithstanding the voluminous research on self-efficacy by management scholars, the concept and application of self-efficacy does not appear to have been broadly disseminated throughout the business community. To illustrate, a review of a sample of popular Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management (HRM) textbooks shows that self-efficacy does not occupy a prominent place compared to constructs such as goal setting or feedback and coaching while anecdotal evidence from interviews with a selection of senior HRM practitioners did not find any evidence that self-efficacy data was being collected. In order to provide a more rigorous indication of the extent to which the topic of

self-efficacy has been publicized in business management practice, Table 1 documents the results of a key word search of relevant constructs (September 28, 2010) from one primarily academic (questia.com) and two practitioner oriented (HBR.org and Money.cnn.com) websites (N.B. the word 'business' was added to filter out non-business related publications).

**TABLE 1**

*Search Results for Selected Key Words*

| Source | Employee Motivation | Goal Setting | Feedback & Coaching | Self-Efficacy | Self-Confidence | Employee Engagement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Questia.com*** | 955 | 4062 | 4479 | 3074 | 20450 | 469 |
| Books | 420 | 2442 | 2984 | 1843 | 16842 | 37 |
| Journal Articles | 301 | 1088 | 903 | 1194 | 1800 | 110 |
| Magazine Articles | 117 | 422 | 500 | 34 | 898 | 269 |
| Newspaper Articles | 117 | 110 | 92 | 3 | 909 | 53 |
| **HBR.org** | 41 | 121 | 62 | 1 | 15 | 79 |
| Books | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| HBR Articles | 11 | 29 | 19 | 0 | 7 | 13 |
| HBS Cases | 16 | 35 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 15 |
| Other Articles | 4 | 20 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| Other | 9 | 32 | 23 | 1 | 4 | 38 |
| **Money.cnn.com** | 12 | 23 | 73 | 1 | 173 | 5 |

*The word "business" was added on the questia.com search to facilitate comparison with the other sites

On questia.com, self-confidence had by far the largest number of hits across all publication channels while goal setting, feedback and coaching, and self-efficacy scored a similar number of hits in books and journal articles. However, there was a dramatic decrease in the number of hits for self-efficacy in management oriented publication channels (magazine and newspaper articles) compared with the decrease for self-confidence, goal setting and feedback and coaching. Similarly, the number of hits for self-efficacy was approximately four times that of employee motivation in books and journal articles whereas the number of hits for employee motivation in magazine and newspaper articles was over six times greater than for self-efficacy. Finally, the key word searches of HBR.org and Money.cnn.com turned up only one hit each for self-efficacy, far less than the number of hits for any of the other constructs. The limited reference to self-efficacy in business management

oriented publication channels is perplexing given the strong and positive nature of the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance. Indeed, it may be yet another example of the business world ignoring research from business schools (Bartunek et al., 2001; Porter & McKibbin, 1988; van Aken, 2004).

In sharp contrast to the infrequent references to self-efficacy in business management oriented publications, Table 1 shows that the practitioner developed concept of employee engagement had over eight times as many hits as self-efficacy in magazine and newspaper articles in spite of its relatively recent emergence as a management tool. Employee engagement has been defined as "an individual's sense of purpose and focused energy, evident to others in the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward organizational goals" (Macey et al., 2009) and has commonly been described as employees putting forth "discretionary effort" (Towers-Perrin, 2003a). This definition highlights the parallels between employee engagement and self-efficacy as work motivation related constructs as they imply employees must mobilize the necessary motivation and focused energy to achieve organizational goals through their persistent efforts. The close resemblance in their definitions also suggests that self-efficacy and employee engagement may even be describing the same construct, albeit by two distinct audiences. The possibility that self-efficacy and employee engagement are similar constructs is in fact supported by the high correlations ranging from .71 to .76 found in a meta-analysis (Christian & Slaughter, 2007). Therefore, the development of distinct self-efficacy and employee engagement literatures appears to illustrate the persistent observation that researchers and users belong to separate communities with very different values and ideologies and that these differences impede utilization (Beyer & Trice, 1982).

One plausible explanation for the slow dissemination of self-efficacy theory and practice into management oriented publication channels is that research in this field has been almost exclusively conducted by academics using student participants in non-work related

settings (Saks, 1995b). Although this approach has allowed control over research environments and the manipulation of efficacy beliefs, theories must ultimately be judged in terms of their providing usable knowledge (Argyris, 1991) while social utility is a critical factor in evaluating scientific practice (Bandura, 2005). Therefore, generalizing these results to actual work environments is an important step as workplaces are immersed in complex political, social, economic and operational factors that are difficult to account for in controlled experimental conditions. Given that general human behavior is sensitive to such factors, to the extent that the laboratory and the outside world systematically vary, it is highly likely that human behavior at work will also be influenced by them (Levitt & List, 2007). Extending research on self-efficacy from the laboratory to the real world of work is even more critical given that the research by Judge et al (2007) found that self-efficacy was not related to performance on more complex tasks in field settings with employed adults.

By contrast, research on employee engagement has been predominantly undertaken in actual work environments where the laboratory is the workplace. This research has consistently found a strong and positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance. For example, one study of 65 companies found that shareholder value for companies in the top 25% of a proprietary employee engagement index was more than double that for companies in the bottom 25% (Macey et al., 2009). Similarly, another study of 125 organizations found statistically significant correlations (r=.12 to .19) between a proprietary measure of employee engagement and a range of outcomes including profitability (Harter et al., 2006). Although these studies only prove there is a correlation between employee engagement and profitability and not necessarily a causal or reciprocal relationship, it is not surprising that employee engagement has been widely adopted by management. The fact these studies were conducted in the real world of work and are linked to financial performance provide a strong incentive for organizations to embrace employee engagement as a key metric whereas the strong correlations found between self-efficacy and work-related

performance are based on laboratory studies and have not been directly tied to financial performance.

The similarities in the definitions of self-efficacy and employee engagement and their starkly contrasting dissemination patterns suggests further investigation is required into the degree of distinctiveness between these constructs as well as their respective roles in influencing work-related performance. In particular, conducting self-efficacy research in actual work environments would make an important contribution to providing external validation to self-efficacy's influence on work-related performance. Further, assessing the influence of employee engagement at the individual level of analysis on work-related performance would make an important contribution as research to date has been focused at the organizational level (Schneider 2009, personal correspondence). The research described in this paper seeks to address these issues by analyzing the relationships between self-efficacy, employee engagement and work-related performance for employees undertaking a challenging work-related task using objective performance data.

## *LITERATURE REVIEW*

### Self-Efficacy and Performance

Within the research literature the significance of self-efficacy in motivating better performance is well established (Gist & Mitchell, 1992) and is a core component of Locke and Latham's model of work motivation (Locke & Latham, 2004). Self-efficacy beliefs are characterized as being task or domain specific and are proposed to motivate better performance in a number of ways (Bandura, 1997). First, self-efficacy is associated with feelings of competency and confidence in one's perceived skill to perform a required task. Consequently, when confronted with obstacles or challenges, people with high self-efficacy are likely to demonstrate persistent and sustained energy in focusing on a given task (Bandura, 1991). By comparison, people with low self-efficacy have less confidence in their ability to perform a task and are likely to be easily put off by obstacles or challenges. A

second way self-efficacy motivates better performance is that having high self-efficacy increases the sense of control or agency one has over one's life circumstances (Bandura, 1986). Agentic people are proactive in their behavior and take steps to organize themselves and their environments, regulate their behavior appropriately and strive to reach goals. Furthermore, agentic people are also likely to engage in reflection on their experiences and gain insights into better regulation of their performance (Bandura, 2006). These factors of confidence in one's competence, sense of personal agency and control and perceptions of how effective one can be in achieving outcomes are directly relevant to employee motivation and work performance. Employees who feel confident, agentic and effective are likely to be motivated to perform at a higher level.

The strong interest in the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance has led to two meta-analyses being conducted (Judge et al., 2007; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). The meta-analysis undertaken by Stajkovic et al (1998) included 114 studies where 'task or job specific' self-efficacy and work-related performance had been measured and found a weighted average correlation between these variables of .38, representing a 28% performance gain in performance. This increase is at least double the effect size of related work motivation constructs such as goal setting (Wood & Locke, 1987) or feedback and coaching (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) and strongly supports the importance of self-efficacy as a critical factor in work-related performance. In contrast, the meta-analysis undertaken by Judge et al (2007) included 186 studies altogether (the 114 in the Stajkovic study and 72 additional ones) and found that distal variables such as general mental ability, personality and experience reduced the predictive validity of self-efficacy on work-related performance by 67.4%. However this study also found that moderator variables such as task complexity, timing, self-efficacy measure, prior task exposure, work-related performance measure, type of study and participants influenced predictive validity and suggested the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance was context dependent.

To illustrate, when the influence of distal variables were controlled, self-efficacy did not predict performance if (1) task complexity was medium or high; (2) the time interval between the measurement of self-efficacy and performance was relatively long; (3) Likert scales were used; (4) performance was measured subjectively; (5) the study was conducted in a field setting; or (6) the sample was employed adults (Judge et al., 2007). In particular, the finding that the positive correlations between self-efficacy and work-related performance highlighted by Stajkovic et al (1998) did not carry over to studies where more complex tasks were evaluated in field settings with employed adults has significant implications for management practice as it implies that self-efficacy may not be important in lifting work-related performance. Therefore, studying the relationship between task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance on more complex tasks in work settings with employees clearly warrants further investigation.

The measures of self-efficacy included in the above studies were task-and job specific self-efficacy but excluded generalized self-efficacy. Although generalized self-efficacy originated from the concept of self-efficacy generality within Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001), 'generalized' self-efficacy is conceptualized as a relatively stable, trait-like, generalized competence belief (Chen, 2004) whereas 'task' self-efficacy is characterized as a malleable, state-like construct (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). After an extensive review, Stajkovic et al (1998) concluded there was high discriminant validity between specific and generalized self-efficacy and on this basis excluded studies measuring generalized self-efficacy from the meta-analysis, an approach also adopted by Judge et al (2007). However it has been argued that general self-efficacy may help to explain a proportion of variance in motivation research beyond that explained by task-specific self-efficacy (Chen, 2001). Given the above, studies in the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship should include general self-efficacy in order to maximize explanatory value.

A detailed examination of the 186 studies included in the more recent meta-analysis by Judge et al (2007) found only four studies involving employees being assessed on actual work-related tasks (Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gist, 1989; Gist et al., 1989) while an additional search found one other study where employees were participants (Morin & Latham, 2000). Table 2 provides a summary of these studies.

**TABLE 2**

*Valid Work-Related Self-Efficacy/Work Performance Studies*

| Study | Experimental Design | Tasks | Participants | Outcome Measures | Timing of Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gist et al (1989) | Classroom* | Computer Skills | University Managers | Timed 15 minute Performance Test* | Immediate Post Training* |
| Gist (1989) | Classroom* | Idea Generation | Federal Scientific Agency Managers | Idea Quantity and Divergence* | Immediate Post Training* |
| Frayne & Geringer (2000) | Organization | Self-Management Skills | Insurance Salespeople | Objective & Subjective Performance | 3, 6, 9, 12 months |
| Morin & Latham (2000) | Organization | Interpersonal Communication Skills | Supervisors and Engineers | Training reaction & peer assessment* | 1 month* |
| Gibson (2001) | Organization | Goal Setting | Nurses | Patient Surveys* | 2 weeks* |

*Study limitations that leave self-efficacy/work-related performance issues unresolved.

The study by Frayne & Geringer (2000) found that self-management skills, which can be viewed as a set of behavioral and cognitive strategies that assist individuals in structuring their environment, establishing self-motivation, and facilitating behaviors appropriate for attaining performance standards (Manz, 1986), were a positive and independent causal variable on job performance. The authors also hypothesized that self-efficacy was a potential mediating variable. However, Bandura (1997) states that self-efficacy beliefs affect the self-regulation of cognitive processes and that it is the variations in self-efficacy beliefs that produce variations in the use of skills. Therefore, the causal link in this study should have been that the self-management training boosted participant self-efficacy which in turn increased their job performance rather than investigating whether or not self-efficacy was a

mediating variable in the hypothesized self-management training/job performance relationship. Although the study's findings suggest that self-efficacy has a strong influence on work-related performance, the results provide only an indirect measure of this relationship due to the misrepresentation of the cognitive processes involved. Of the remaining four studies involving employees, two primarily used third party observational outcome measures taken two weeks to one month after an intervention rather than objective performance measures over a longitudinal time frame (Gibson, 2001; Morin & Latham, 2000). The last two studies (Gist, 1989; Gist et al., 1989) were set in classrooms and used artificial performance outcome measures that were taken immediately after training rather than work-related measures over a longitudinal time horizon.

While these five studies provide supporting evidence for a positive relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance, they are based on designs that did not directly measure the relationship between self-efficacy and objective job performance on work-related tasks by employees in an organizational setting. Further, only the Frayne & Geringer (2000) study had a time frame exceeding 8 weeks. As Saks (1995) stated, very little is understood about self-efficacy and training outside of well-controlled experiments and it is not known to what extent the findings of prior studies generalize to actual employees. In addition, the need for insights regarding the causal influence of self-efficacy beliefs using both experimental designs and longitudinal studies has been noted (Pajares, 1997). Therefore, directly examining the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance in actual work environments is overdue and leads to our first hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1(a)* Task-specific self-efficacy has a positive relationship with work-related performance in organizational settings where actual objective performance is measured.

*Hypothesis 1(b)* General self-efficacy has a positive relationship with work-related performance in organizational settings where actual objective performance is measured.

**Employee Engagement**

Over the past two decades, employee engagement has emerged as a concept of significant interest to both academics and practitioners. Academic interest in employee engagement can be traced to an influential 1990 article that elaborated on the psychological conditions of engagement and disengagement (Kahn, 1990). As a starting point, Kahn (1990) used the sociological perspective that an individual's attachment to or detachment from their roles varies under a range of conditions (Goffman, 1961). Kahn (1990) changed the terms 'attachment to' and 'detachment from' to personal 'engagement' and 'disengagement' to account for the psychologically complex and emotionally charged social world of organizational life (Diamond & Allcorn, 1985). Personal "engagement' and 'disengagement' describe how individuals express themselves through role performance to enable them to cope with internal ambivalences and external conditions imposed on them by being members of an ongoing group and system (Kahn, 1990). Kahn (1990) initially defined engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances" and disengagement as "the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performances" during the exploratory stage of his research (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). The extent to which employees exhibit conditions of engagement and disengagement are influenced by both the psychological experience of work that drives people's attitudes and behaviors (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) as well as a range of internal and external factors that simultaneously influence this experience (Alderfer, 1987).

The formal definition for engagement emerging from Kahn's (1990) research was "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive,

emotional), and active, full role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p. 700). This definition underlines the discretion employees have to be cognitively and emotionally engaged in performing their roles. Other definitions proffered for engagement reinforce its cognitive and affective components: "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74); "a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance" (Saks, 2006, p. 602); and "an individual's sense of purpose and focused energy, evident to others in the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward organizational goals" (Macey et al., 2009, p. 7). Common to these definitions is the notion that engagement is both a "motivational state reflected in a genuine willingness to invest focused effort towards achieving organizational goals" (Mauno et al., 2010, p. 4) and a "work-related psychological state" reflected in words like emotional, fulfilling and sense of purpose. Engagement can therefore be characterized as having both cognitive and affective components that are likely to result in motivated work behavior (Inceoglu & Fleck, 2010; Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2006). In effect, the cognitive and affective components represent psychological states indicating an individual's predisposition or readiness to be engaged in their role performance. External factors then determine the extent to which motivation is activated, evidenced by the work behaviors displayed by individuals in their role performances.

**Employee engagement and performance**

Management interest in employee engagement began in 1993 shortly after Kahn's (1990) influential article with the development of Gallup Organization's $Q^{12}$ employee engagement instrument (Creglow & Harter, 1998). Subsequent meta-analyzes of data collected by Gallup consistently showed employee engagement was positively correlated with customer loyalty (r = .22 to .32), profitability (r = .12 to .19) and productivity (r =.16 to. 24) and negatively correlated with turnover (r = -.18 to -.28), safety incidents (r = -.18 to -.28),

absenteeism (r = -.12 to -.29) and shrinkage (r= -.25 to -.37) (Harter et al., 2006). From a practitioner perspective, measuring employee engagement as 'discretionary effort' resonated strongly with business executives as it supported the increased focus on human capital as a source of competitive advantage (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2005; Macey et al., 2009). Academic studies support Harter et al's (2006) findings as employee engagement has been found to be positively associated with increased employee commitment (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006); in-role and extra-role behavior (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004); and service climate, employee performance and customer loyalty (Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005). Overall, these studies suggest management interest in employee engagement as a work-related, performance enhancing construct appears to be well founded.

From an academic perspective, broadening the concept of employee engagement from a narrow behavioral focus (discretionary effort) to one incorporating both affective and cognitive components provides a link to other affective work-related constructs. In particular, adding an affective component suggests employee engagement is closely related to job satisfaction which has been described as 'a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences' (Locke, 1976, p. 1304) as well as organizational commitment and job involvement, constructs that have been used historically to capture similar employee attitudes (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). However, simply demonstrating a positive relationship between employee engagement, organizational commitment and job involvement does not shed light on the causal relationship between these affective constructs and behavior. For instance, a positive correlation has consistently been found between job satisfaction and performance but the question of whether job satisfaction affects performance or vice versa or whether these constructs have a reciprocal relationship remains unanswered (Judge et al., 2001). Therefore although the affective component of employee engagement is positively related to organizational commitment and job involvement, it is not clear whether more committed and involved employees perform at a

higher level or that better performing employees simply report being more committed and involved in their jobs and leads to our second hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 2* Employee engagement has a positive relationship with work-related performance.

**Job Burnout, Engagement and Self-Efficacy**

Although studying employee engagement is a relatively recent phenomenon, studies of job burnout, a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, were first published over 30 years ago (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). These studies provide significant insight into engagement's affective and cognitive components as job engagement has been characterized as the positive antithesis of job burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Job burnout is comprised of three dimensions: overwhelming exhaustion (exhaustion); feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job (cynicism) and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment (inefficacy) (Maslach, 2001). Consistent with the paradigmatic change in psychology's preoccupation with repairing the worst things in life to a focus on building positive qualities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was specifically developed to replace job burnout's three dimensions with positive work engagement ones (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Using this positive psychology approach, exhaustion was re-conceptualized as vigor which is defined by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and be persistent even in the face of difficulties (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Similarly, cynicism was re-defined as dedication which is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Finally, inefficacy/ineffectiveness was changed to absorption which refers to being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes

quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). These definitions suggest all three dimensions have both cognitive (i.e. mental resilience, challenge, fully concentrated) and affective (i.e. persistence, pride, engrossed) components.

The affective component of engagement is also explicitly recognized and typified by adjectives such as 'valued' (Kahn, 1990), 'enthusiastic' (Macey et al., 2009) or 'detached' (Hochschild, 2003). These affective psychological states can impact an individual's motivated behavior in either a positive, neutral or negative manner which supports describing engagement as an affective, cognitive-motivational state. In contrast, self-efficacy theory posits that affect is self-regulated through the exercise of personal control (Bandura, 1997). As a result, an individual's affective response to a situation will be regulated by the strength of their belief in their self-efficacy that in turn negates affect's influence on motivated behavior. Therefore, while engagement and self-efficacy can both be considered to be cognitive-motivational states, the role of affect in motivating action distinguishes them. Affect is explicitly recognized within employee engagement as part of one's psychological state that can lead to motivated action whereas affect does not play a direct part in motivating action according to self-efficacy theory.

Engagement's role in motivating performance varies widely across a range of organizational contexts (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Mauno et al., 2010). Meta-analysis studies show the strongest and most reliable drivers of engagement include: self-efficacy, feedback, autonomy, resources, social, support, organizational climate, optimism, job control, trust, fairness and leadership (Christian & Slaughter, 2007; Halbesleben, 2010b; Mauno et al., 2010). These meta-analyses also found job resources, in the form of feedback, autonomy/control and social support had estimated population correlations ranging from 0.20 to 0.46 while personal resources, in the form of self-efficacy had estimated population correlations ranging from 0.31 to 0.76. The strength of the correlations between self-efficacy and the three dimensions of work engagement

(Christian & Slaughter, 2007; Halbesleben, 2010b; Salanova et al., 2002; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) raises the issue of possible conceptual overlap between these constructs (Mauno et al., 2010). The very high correlations between self-efficacy and work engagement are not surprising given it has previously been suggested that absorption (the reverse measure of lack of personal accomplishment or inefficacy in job burnout) reflects a personality characteristic similar to self-efficacy (Demerouti et al., 2001). Further, self-efficacy plays a crucial role in explaining work engagement as the positive gain spiral it has been shown to initiate with job performance can be plausibly extended to include engagement (Salanova et al., 2010). However, the different way affect is treated in self-efficacy theory suggests employee engagement and task-specific self-efficacy should be related but independent predictors of work-related performance and leads to our third hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 3* Employee engagement's cognitive component mediates the self-efficacy/work-related performance while the affective component explains variance in performance above and beyond that explained by self-efficacy.

## *METHODS*

### Research Setting and Procedure

The study took place in a large financial services organization. In recent years this organization had implemented a new customer relationship management (CRM) program that required customer facing employees to identify eligible customers for a free financial profile appointment with the employee. The employee's task was to proactively ask the customer to make the profile appointment during a regular over the counter (OTC) transaction. This task was considered to be relatively complex compared to other tasks undertaken by customer facing employees as it required: (1) technical skills (accessing the customer's profile on the

CRM system); (2) judgment (knowing when was it appropriate to ask the customer for an appointment and how best to introduce the idea); and (3) interpersonal skills (handling objections, being sensitive to the customer's needs) while still processing the specific transaction the customer attended the branch for in the first place.

The organization's CRM system provided individual-level data on profile appointment related factors and sales (both number and value). The CRM system was introduced three years prior to the field study as a vehicle to track employee performance and support the organization's strategic focus on building customer relationships that would ultimately lead to increased sales and profitability. Collected data enabled the organization to recognize and reward individual employees for outstanding performance as well as support this strategic initiative. Therefore, there was high awareness among employees of the data being collected and its relevance for assessing their performance. In addition, the organization had been collecting data on employee engagement for a few years using an external consulting organization. Although employee engagement scores were seen as satisfactory, the host organization's management believed there was significant scope for improvement.

**Participants**

Twenty mid-sized branches located in a major metropolitan city were nominated by the host organization as being representative of their network on a range of demographic, geographic and business-related criteria. Each branch typically had six employees: manager, supervisor, and four frontline staff. Despite these different work titles, all branch staff were expected to perform customer facing duties and to be proactive in asking customers to attend profile appointments. The researchers sent emails to all staff from the nominated branches at their work email addresses advising them of the study's aims and inviting them to participate in answering survey questions that were posted online on the organization's intranet site. Participants were therefore aware that survey responses could be accessed by the organization. The survey was part of a larger attitude survey and incorporated seven multiple

performance level task-specific self-efficacy questions as well as items for general self-efficacy and employee engagement. There were 64 respondents who completed all items on the survey (an overall participation rate of 54%). Tenure with the host organization ranged from 46% for more than 11 years; 42% for between one and five years; 9% for between six and ten years and 3% for less than one year. Of the 64 respondents, 38 (10 managers, 10 supervisors and 18 frontline staff) were employed at the same branch for all four quarters for which performance data was collected. Therefore any analysis involving performance measures only used survey data from these respondents.

**Measures**

*Self-Efficacy*. In order to develop appropriate measures of self-efficacy for the study, we interviewed a small cross-section of branch level employees from different job classifications (managers, supervisors and front line staff) to develop a better understanding of the challenges they face with respect to customer interactions in branches as well as uncover any specific issues with making profile appointments and selling to customers. Through this process and in consultation with management, we identified seven relevant tasks where measures of employee confidence on a range of customer interactions could feasibly be constructed and collected:

1. Ask a customer an open-ended question during an OTC transaction
2. Ask customers to come in for a profile during an OTC transaction
3. Point out areas for customer to improve their banking during a profile appointment
4. Make recommendations to customers based on their specific needs
5. Ask the customer for their business where a clear need has been identified
6. Communicate appointment benefit to customer when making outbound sales call
7. Ask customers to come in for a profile appointment when making outbound sales call

For example, tasks related to behaviors associated with making profile appointments with customers during an over-the-counter transaction made up the self-efficacy measure 'Make appointments SE'. This item asked respondents to "*Think about your ability right now*

*to ask customers to come in for a profile appointment during an over the counter transaction when there's a long queue. How certain are you about how often you can do so?"* A second item related to behaviors associated with asking customers for their business where a clear need had been identified and made up the self-efficacy measure 'Ask for business SE'. This item asked respondents to *"Think about your ability right now to ask customers for their business where a clear need has been identified but the customer has expressed a concern or a potential objection. How certain are you about how often you can do so?"* These two self-efficacy measures were directly related to the two key performance measures tracked by management: 'Make appointments SE' corresponded to 'Appointments made'; and 'Ask for business SE' corresponded to 'Products sold'.

To assess respondent task-specific self-efficacy, participants were asked to indicate on a scale of 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) their level of confidence (strength) to undertake the tasks described above using six performance levels (degrees of difficulty) in line with Bandura's recommendation to collect self-efficacy data (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). To illustrate, the lowest degree of difficulty for asking customers to come in for a profile appointment was *"ask 1 in every 10 customers"* while the highest degree of difficulty was *"ask every single customer"*. When using multiple performance levels, the overall confidence score for self-efficacy is typically calculated by dropping responses for the lowest and highest degree of difficulty and computing the mean confidence rating on the remaining four levels as the overall measure of self-efficacy strength (Lee & Bobko, 1994). The mean confidence level for the Make Appointments SE and Ask for Business SE items was computed using the above approach. In addition, a factor analysis was conducted that yielded a two-factor model for all seven self-efficacy measures. One factor (Easy) related to the three items that were seen as relatively easy to perform while the other factor (Hard) related to the three items considered relatively hard to perform. Correlation analysis showed that the relationship between the above two composite self-efficacy measures using Bandura's

recommended approach was not as strong as the relationship between the two composite 'Hard' factors with their respective performance measures: Make appointments SE = .389, p = 0.007 vs. Make appointments Hard = .425, p = 0.003; and Ask for business SE = .295, p = 0.032 vs. Ask for business Hard = .440, p = 0.002. In order to undertake the most rigorous test possible of the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship, the composite 'Hard' factor self-efficacy measures was selected as the best predictor of work-related performance.

*General Self-Efficacy.* Although general self-efficacy had been expressly excluded from previous meta-analyses of the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship, we wanted to assess whether this variable acted predicted work-related performance. We used the 8-item scale developed by Chen, et al., (2001). For consistency purposes with other items and to minimize respondent confusion within the larger attitude survey, it was converted to a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree) from a 5-point one. Cronbach's alpha was .91 slightly higher than reported in the literature (Chen et al., 2001).

*Employee Engagement*. To measure employee engagement, we used the 9-item UWES that has three constituent elements: vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2006). This scale employs a slightly modified 7-point scale (0=never to 6=every day) from the other 7-point Likert Scales in the survey. From an academic perspective, the UWES has been extensively tested for its three factor reliability, inter-correlations, internal consistency and stability while from a practical point of view, there are over 30,000 employee respondents in an international database (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). All scales and sub-scales showed Cronbach's alpha ranging from .85 to .87 and are virtually identical to those reported in the literature (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

*Work-Related Performance.* The host organization's management closely monitored two performance variables: Number of profile appointments made (Appointments made); and Number of products sold (Products sold). Data was collected for two points in time: 'Time 1' performance was the mean of the last quarter of the third year and the first quarter of the

fourth year since the introduction of the CRM system while 'Time 2' performance was the mean of the third and fourth quarters of the fourth year since its introduction. In effect there was a nine month gap between the mid-points of the two time periods that the performance data was collected. The survey was undertaken at the mid-point of 'Time 2'.

*Individual (Personality) Differences.* Given the overall number of variables being collected in the survey as well as the constraints of conducting a field study with employed adults, it was not possible for employees to undertake general mental ability tests. We were however able to include the abbreviated (11 item) version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) 44 item Scale (Rammstedt & John, 2007) to measure personality differences. The abbreviated version predicts almost 70% of the variance of the full scales. Of the five abbreviated BFI scales, three (Extraversion, Neuroticism and Conscientiousness) have correlations of between .82 and .89 with the full BFI scales while two (Agreeableness and Openness to Experience) have correlations of .74 and .79 respectively (Rammstedt & John, 2007). Cronbach's alpha ranged from .52 and .65 for four of the five abbreviated scales (the exception was Openness to Experience which was dropped from further analysis) showing these personality items possessed marginal but acceptable psychometric properties for the purpose of this field study.

## *RESULTS*

Table 3 displays the means, standard deviations and correlations for the two composite 'Hard' task-specific self-efficacy (Make appointments SE and Ask for business SE), general self-efficacy, employee engagement, performance (Appointments made and Products sold) and individual (personality) differences measures.

**TABLE 3**

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Self Efficacy, Engagement and Performance and Personality*

| | *Variable* | *Mean* | *S.D.* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* | *7* | *8* | *9* | *10* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Make App't SE | 35.3 | 27.7 | - | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. | Ask for Business SE | 48.5 | 27.4 | .452** | - | | | | | | | | |
| 3. | Generalized SE | 5.8 | 0.7 | .105 | .242X | - | | | | | | | |
| 4. | Engagement | 4.1 | 0.9 | .387** | .375** | .504** | - | | | | | | |
| 5. | Appointments Made | 33.6 | 41.2 | .425** | .266X | .380* | .423** | - | | | | | |
| 6. | Products Sold | 17.2 | 20.6 | .302X | .440** | .469** | .522** | .899** | - | | | | |
| 7. | Extraversion | 4.8 | 1.2 | -.044 | .167 | .392** | .099 | -.028 | .009 | - | | | |
| 8. | Conscientiousness | 6.2 | 0.8 | -.009 | .094 | .325* | .439** | -.111 | -.033 | .124 | - | | |
| 9. | Neuroticism | 2.8 | 1.2 | -.054 | -.083 | -.276* | -.162 | -.205 | -.191 | -.441** | -.289** | - | |
| 10. | Agreeableness | 4.8 | 1.2 | .058 | .065 | .233X | .464** | .054 | -.033 | .117 | .572** | -.365** | - |

**Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). X Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation Analysis - Self-Efficacy and Performance**

Table 3 shows there were significant correlations between: (1) Make appointments SE with its matching performance measure of Appointments made (r = .43); (2) Ask for business SE with its matching performance measure of Products sold (r = .44); and (3) General self-efficacy and both performance measures - Appointments made (r = .38) and Products sold (r = .47). All four correlations were higher than the r = .38 correlation reported in the meta-analysis by Stajkovic et al (1998). However, general self-efficacy was not correlated with Make appointments SE (r = .11) and was only weakly significantly correlated with Ask for business SE (r = .24). Therefore as suggested by the literature, the weak or insignificant correlations between task-specific self-efficacy and general self-efficacy confirm they are different constructs even though both forms of self-efficacy are highly correlated with work-related performance. Finally, there was no correlation between any of the four personality variables with either performance measure and as a result there was no basis upon which to examine the influence of personality on work-related performance.

**Regression Analysis – Self-efficacy**

The next task was to conduct hierarchical regression analysis of task-specific self-efficacy and general self-efficacy with the two performance measures. The distribution of the

performance data was first checked for normality as applying linear regression analysis to count data can be problematic (Gardner, Mulvey, & Shaw, 1995). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was non-significant (p = .20) at both Times 1 and 2, indicating the data was not significantly different from a normal distribution.

For the hierarchical regression modeling of 'Appointments made' and 'Products sold' 'Time 1' performance was entered at the first step, the relevant task-specific self-efficacy variable was entered at the second step and general self-efficacy was entered at the third step (See Table 4). For both performance measures, past performance (Time 1) was the best predictor of future performance: 'Appointments made' (Adj. $R^2$ of .416, p = 0.000); and 'Products sold' (Adj. $R^2$ of .198, p = 0.003). The introduction of 'Make appointments SE' at the second step showed an incremental Adj. $R^2$ of .116 (p=0.004) for 'Appointments made' while the introduction of 'Ask for business SE' at the second step showed an incremental Adj. $R^2$ of .190 (p = 0.002) for 'Products sold'. The introduction of general self-efficacy at the third step was significant for 'Products sold' with an incremental Adj. $R^2$ of .079 (p = .017 but was not significant for 'Appointments made' (p = 0.239). The combination of past performance and task-specific self-efficacy explained 52.8% of the variance in 'Appointments made' while the combination of past performance, task-specific self-efficacy and general self-efficacy explained 45.5% of the variance in 'Products sold'.

**TABLE 4**

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Performance at Time 2 Holding Performance at Time 1 Constant - Self-Efficacy and General Self-Efficacy*

| *Step* | *Dependent Variable* | *R* | $R^2$ | *Adj.* $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ | *F Change* | *Sig F Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Appointments Made Time 2 | | | | | | |
| 1 | Appointments Made Time 1 | .66 | .43 | .41 | | $28.11^{**}$ (1,36) | .000 |
| 2 | Make Appointments SE | .74 | .55 | .52 | .12 | $9.21^{**}$ (1,35) | .004 |
| 3 | General Self-Efficacy | .75 | .57 | .53 | .02 | 1.44 (1,34) | .239 |
| | Products Sold Time 2 | | | | | | |
| 1 | Products Sold Time 1 | .47 | .22 | .20 | | $10.38^{**}$ (1,36) | .003 |
| 2 | Ask for Business SE | .64 | .41 | .38 | .19 | $11.55^{**}$ (1,35) | .002 |
| 3 | General Self-Efficacy | .71 | .50 | .46 | .09 | $6.24^{*}$ (1,34) | .017 |

** p ≤ .01 level, * p ≤ .05 level, $^{X}$p ≤ .10 level.

Overall, the results strongly support Hypothesis 1 (a): Task-specific self-efficacy has a strong and positive relationship with work-related performance in organizational settings where employee performance is measured on work-related tasks on a longitudinal basis. The mean correlation of r = .43 between task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance was higher than that found in the Stajkovic et al (1998) meta-analysis while the regression analysis showed that the both task-specific self-efficacy measures explained highly significant ($p \leq 0.01$) amounts of additional variance in employee performance even after controlling for past performance. In contrast, Hypothesis 1 (b) was only partially supported as general self-efficacy explained additional variance for only one of the two performance measures at a significant ($p \leq 0.05$) level when past performance was controlled for.

**Regression Analysis – Employee Engagement**

Table 3 also shows employee engagement was highly significantly correlated with both work-related performance measures (r = .42 and .52), task-specific self-efficacy measures (r = .38 and .39), and general self-efficacy (r = .50) with the mean correlation (r = .47) between engagement and performance slightly higher than the mean correlation (r = .43) between task-specific self-efficacy and performance. Table 5 shows that after controlling for past performance, the introduction of employee engagement added incremental Adj. $R^2$ of .086 (p = 0.018) for Appointments made with past performance the best predictor. In contrast, employee engagement was a better predictor of Products sold than past performance with employee engagement having an Adj. $R^2$ of .271 (p = 0.002) compared to the Adj. $R^2$ of .198 (p = 0.003) for past performance. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

**TABLE 5**

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Performance at Time 2 Holding Performance at Time 1 Constant – Employee Engagement*

| *Step* | *Dependent Variable* | *R* | $R^2$ | *Adj.* $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ | *F Change* | *(df1,df2)* | *Sig F Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Appointments Made Time 2 | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Appointments Made Time 1 | .66 | .43 | .41 | | 27.09** | (1,36) | .000 |
| 2 | Employee Engagement | .72 | .52 | .49 | .09 | 6.17* | (1,35) | .018 |
| | Products Sold Time 2 | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Products Sold Time 1 | .46 | .22 | .19 | | 9.90** | (1,36) | .003 |
| 2 | Employee Engagement | .63 | .49 | .46 | .27 | 18.49** | (1,35) | .000 |

** $p \leq .01$ level, * $p \leq .05$ level, X $p \leq .10$ level.

**Regression and Mediation Analysis – Self-Efficacy and Employee Engagement**

Table 6 shows that both employee engagement and task-specific self-efficacy act as independent predictors of work-related performance whereas general self-efficacy does not. Both Make appointments SE and Ask for business SE were significant ($p \leq 0.05$) and consistent predictors of Appointments made and Products sold respectively, regardless of whether or not past performance was controlled for. On the other hand, employee engagement was only a weakly significant ($p \leq 0.10$) predictor of Appointments made when past performance was controlled for but a significant predictor of Appointments made ($p \leq 0.05$) when past performance was not controlled for. In contrast, employee engagement was a highly significant ($p \leq 0.01$) predictor of Products sold regardless of whether or not past performance was controlled for. Overall, employee engagement was a significant and weaker predictor of one performance measure (Appointments made) and a highly significant and strong predictor of the other performance measure (Products sold) than their respective task-specific self-efficacy measures. In total, past performance, employee engagement and task-specific self-efficacy explained between 53.1% and 54.4% of the variance in performance.

**TABLE 6**

*Regression Analysis of Employee Engagement and Task-Specific Self-Efficacy on Performance at Time 2 - With and Without Performance at Time 1 Held Constant*

| *Dependent Variable:* | *β* | *T* | *Sig.* | *Dependent Variable:* | *β* | *T* | *Sig.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Appointments Made Time 2[y] | | | | Products Sold Time 2[y] | | | |
| (No Control Variable) | | | | (No Control Variable) | | | |
| Make Appointments SE | .313* | 2.05 | .048 | Ask for Business SE | .346* | 2.50 | .017 |
| Employee Engagement | .321* | 2.10 | .043 | Employee Engagement | .422** | 3.04 | .004 |
| General Self-Efficacy | .258 | 1.48 | .148 | General Self-Efficacy | .209 | 1.21 | .204 |
| Appointments Made Time 2[z] | | | | Products Sold Time 2[z] | | | |
| (With Control Variable) | | | | (With Control Variable) | | | |
| Appointments Made Time 1 | .575** | 5.05 | .000 | Products Sold Time 1 | .434** | 3.84 | .001 |
| Make Appointments SE | .272* | 2.32 | .027 | Ask for Business SE | .302* | 2.55 | .015 |
| Employee Engagement | .215[X] | 1.80 | .081 | Employee Engagement | .434** | 3.69 | .001 |
| General Self-Efficacy | .038 | .26 | .796 | General Self-Efficacy | .130 | .926 | .361 |

**Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). [X] Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).
[y]Performance at Time 2 only; [z]Performance at Time 1 held constant

Having established the that only task self-efficacy and employee engagement were related to performance, the next step was to test for mediation by estimating three regression equations (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Equation 1 must demonstrate the independent variable is related to the mediating variable. Table 2 shows that the correlation between both independent variables (Make Appointments Composite SE and Ask for Business Composite SE) and the mediating variable (Employee Engagement) are highly significant (r=.387 and .375 respectively) at the p=0.01 level. Equation 2 must demonstrate the independent variable is related to the dependent variable. Table 2 shows that the correlations between both independent variables (Make Appointments Composite SE and Ask for Business Composite SE) and their respective performance dependent variables (Appointments Made and Products Sold) are highly significant (r=.425 and .440 respectively) at the p=0.01 level. Finally, Equation 3 must demonstrate that the mediating variable is related to the dependent variable when the dependent variable is regressed on both the independent and mediating variables.

Table 7 (overleaf) shows that Employee Engagement partially mediates the relationship between Make Appointments Composite SE and Appointments Made with Time 1 held constant as the βeta value falls from .337 to .272 and moves from being highly

significant (p=0.01) to significant (p=0.05). Similarly, the introduction of EE partially mediates the relationship between Ask for Business Composite SE and Products Sold with Time 1 held constant as the βeta value falls from .428 to .302 and moves from being highly significant (p=0.01) to significant (p=0.05). Besides partially mediating the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship, employee engagement also helps to explain additional variation above and beyond that of self-efficacy as the βeta value when Appointments Made was regressed against both self-efficacy and employee engagement is weakly significant (.215, p = 0.10) while the βeta value when Product Sold was regressed is highly significant (.434, p = 0.01).

**TABLE 7**
**Results of Mediation Analysis of Employee Engagement on SSE & Performance**

| Adjustment Variable | $R$ | $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ | $F(df)$ | T1 β | SE β | EE β |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Appointments Made – Time 2** | | | | | | | |
| Appointments Made – Time 1 | .66 | .43 | | 27.09$^{**}$(1,36) | .655$^{**}$ | | |
| Making Appointments Hard SSE | .74 | .54 | .11 | | .611$^{**}$ | .337$^{**}$ | |
| Employee Engagement Time 2 | .76 | .58 | .04 | | .575$^{**}$ | .272$^{*}$ | .215$^{X}$ |
| **Products Sold – Time 2** | | | | | | | |
| Products Sold – Time 1 | .46 | .22 | | 9.90$^{**}$(1,34) | .464$^{**}$ | | |
| Ask for Business Hard SSE | .63 | .40 | .18 | | .423$^{**}$ | .428$^{**}$ | |
| Employee Engagement Time 2 | .76 | .57 | .17 | | .434$^{**}$ | .302$^{*}$ | .434$^{**}$ |

$^{**}$Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). $^{*}$ Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). $^{X}$ Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 3 was therefore mainly supported. Employee engagement partially mediates the task-specific self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship while also helping to explain additional variation in performance above and beyond that of self-efficacy alone. Thus is appears that employee engagement's cognitive element primarily acts as a partial mediator while its affective component adds predictive power to the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship. Indeed, employee engagement is a more important variable in predicting Products Sold than self-efficacy which suggests that its affective component is an important consideration i.e. employees who are more dedicated and less cynical are more committed to and effective at sales.

In order to examine the role of engagement's affective component on performance, Table 8 highlights the differences in $\beta$ value and Adj. $R^2$ when first task-specific self-efficacy and then engagement and its three sub-scales are independently regressed on performance while controlling for past performance. Consistent with Table 7, the introduction of engagement reduces task-specific self-efficacy's influence on performance as the $\beta$ value fell from .337 to .272 for Make appointments SE and from .428 to .302 for Ask for business SE with a corresponding decrease in significance levels. However, when the three sub-scales (absorption, vigor and dedication) were independently regressed in place of engagement on Appointments made, the $\beta$ value (.137, p = 0.255) for absorption was insignificant (as was the $\Delta R^2$) whereas the $\beta$ values for vigor (.239, p = 0.060) and dedication (.222, p = 0.066) were significant (as was the $\Delta R^2$) while the $\beta$ value for Make appointments SE, fell from being highly significant to significant. Although not as pronounced in terms of statistical significance, there was a similar effect when absorption, vigor and dedication were independently regressed in place of engagement for Products sold. The $\beta$ value for task-specific self-efficacy fell from .428 to .364 when absorption was regressed and even more sharply to .289 when vigor and dedication were regressed on performance. Concurrently, the $\beta$ value for absorption was lower and the $\beta$ value for vigor and dedication were significantly higher than task-specific self-efficacy after they were regressed. Overall the regressions show absorption, the engagement dimension most similar to self-efficacy, was the least influential predictor of performance while vigor and dedication, the engagement dimensions with the highest affective components, had the greatest influence on performance after controlling for both task-specific self-efficacy and past performance. Therefore, employee engagement, or more specifically vigor and dedication, consistently explain additional variance in work-related performance above and beyond that explained by past performance and task-specific self-efficacy.

**TABLE 7**

*Comparative Analysis of the Influence of Engagement and its Sub-scales on Performance with Task-Specific Self-Efficacy and Past Performance Held Constant*

| Step | Predictors | Engagement | | Absorption | | Vigor | | Dedication | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **β** | **Sig.** | **β** | **Sig.** | **β** | **Sig.** | **β** | **Sig.** |
| 2 | Make appointments SE | .337 | .006 | .337 | .006 | .337 | .006 | .337 | .006 |
| | **Adj. R Square** | **.515** | | **.515** | | **.515** | | **.515** | |
| 3 | Make appointments SE | .272 | .027 | .313 | .011 | .244 | .051 | .274 | .024 |
| | Engagement Scales | .215 | .081 | .137 | .255 | .239 | .060 | .222 | .066 |
| | **Adj. R Square** | **.544** [X] | | **.520** | | **.551** [X] | | **.548** [X] | |
| 2 | Ask for business SE | .428 | .003 | .428 | .003 | .428 | .003 | .428 | .003 |
| | **Adj. R Square** | **.363** | | **.363** | | **.363** | | **.363** | |
| 3 | Ask for business SE | .302 | .015 | .364 | .006 | .289 | .023 | .295 | .016 |
| | Engagement Scales | .434 | .001 | .335 | .011 | .424 | .001 | .448 | .001 |
| | **Adj. R Square** | **.531** [**] | | **.461** [*] | | **.518** [**] | | **.543** [**] | |

[**] Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). [*] Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). [X] Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).

## *DISCUSSION*

Although the widespread popularity of self-efficacy as a topic for academic research has well and truly established that this construct has a significant impact on behavioral outcomes including performance (Bandura, 1997; Gist, 1987; Locke & Latham, 2004), there appears to be limited dissemination of self-efficacy research throughout the wider business community. This absence is somewhat perplexing given the consistent finding that task or job specific self-efficacy have a strong and positive relationship with work-related performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). One plausible explanation for the limited application of self-efficacy research in management practice is the dearth of studies undertaken with employees engaged in real work tasks in workplace settings (Saks, 1995b). By contrast, studies of the practitioner developed concept of employee engagement have shown a strong and positive relationship with a range of outcomes including performance and as a consequence employee engagement has been rapidly adopted by management. Given the conceptual similarity between self-efficacy and employee engagement and limited empirical work examining their combined relationship with work-related performance, this study was undertaken to close the identified gap in the extant self-efficacy/work-related performance

literature as well as explore the relationship between self-efficacy, employee engagement and work-related performance.

Our study provides clear support for Stajkovic et al.'s (1998) meta-analysis as we found a strong and positive relationship between task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance of r = .43 which exceeds the value of r = .38 calculated in this meta-analysis. The higher R value found in our study is most likely to be the result of the approach we took to develop a more robust measure of task-specific self-efficacy than typically used. We also found that employee engagement was highly significantly correlated with task-specific self-efficacy, general self-efficacy and work-related performance with R values ranging from .38 to .52. Having found statistical relationships between these variables, we used hierarchical regression analysis to ascertain the relationship between the two types of self-efficacy and work-related performance. After controlling for past performance, task-specific self-efficacy was a highly significantly predictor of performance (Adj. $R^2$ = .116 and .198, p = .001) while general self-efficacy was a significant predictor (Adj. $R^2$ = .079, p = .05) for only one of the two work-related performance measures. Overall, task-specific self-efficacy was shown to be a much stronger and reliable predictor of work-related performance than general self-efficacy.

With respect to Judge et al's (2007) finding that distal variables such as personality differences, experience or general mental ability may attenuate the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship, none of the four personality variables were correlated with performance and therefore we could not test personality's role in reducing the predictive validity of self-efficacy on work-related performance. With respect to experience, over 97% of employees had performed in their roles for over one year and given the repetitive nature of participants' job roles and the organizational focus on making profile appointments, virtually all participants were highly experienced at key customer interaction tasks. Although we did not explicitly measure general mental ability, we have no reason to suspect there would be

significant variation between participants given they all performed similar duties, the host organization's employment policies and their stable employment tenure.

Our study also found that employee engagement is a very important predictor of work-related performance. Not only was it a significant ($p = .018$) predictor of the number of appointments made but it was a highly significant ($p = 0.000$) and better predictor of the number of products sold than past performance. For both performance measures, the combination of past performance, task-specific self-efficacy and employee engagement helped to explain over 50% of the variance in performance. In contrast, general self-efficacy did not explain any additional variation. Overall our study found that employee engagement is an important new variable in explaining work-related performance. Finally, our study examined the extent to which employee engagement's dimensions provided insight into the role of affect in predicting work-related performance. Our study clearly showed that vigor and dedication helped to explain additional variation above and beyond that of task-self-efficacy whereas absorption only partially explained incremental performance. The fact we were able to show the influence of employee engagement and the two dimensions with the highest affective component after first controlling for past performance clearly reinforces the importance of employee engagement as a predictor of work-related performance.

Overall, our study clearly demonstrates the important and influential role that task-specific self-efficacy has on work-related performance for a complex task in a field setting that used employed adults. Therefore, future studies of the relationship between task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance where convenience samples of students using simulations and artificial performance measures can be undertaken with the knowledge that well-constructed experiments achieve similar results in the real world. In addition, our study provided empirical support for the decision by Stajkovic et al (1998) to exclude general self-efficacy on theoretical grounds when analyzing the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship was justified as general self-efficacy and task-specific self-efficacy are different

constructs. In contrast to task-specific self-efficacy which was a highly significant ($p \leq .01$) predictor for both performance measures, general self-efficacy only explained additional variance for 'Products sold' ($p \leq .05$) and did not explain any additional variance for 'Appointments made'. Therefore, although general self-efficacy may in some circumstances add explanatory power when predicting performance, task-specific self-efficacy is clearly the superior self-efficacy measure.

From an empirical perspective, our findings demonstrate that employee engagement is a related but distinct construct to self-efficacy and acts as an independent predictor of work-related performance, largely due to its affective component. To date, proponents of employee engagement have had to rely on organizational level financial performance to show the positive impact of a highly engaged workforce. Our study makes an important contribution as it assesses the relationship between employee engagement and work-related performance at the individual level of analysis. We have shown that measuring employee engagement at an individual level is just as critical a variable in predicting work-related performance as task-specific self-efficacy. In addition, although general self-efficacy helped to explain some of the variance for the 'Products sold' performance measure above and beyond that of task-specific self-efficacy, employee engagement fully mediated the relationship between general self-efficacy and performance. Therefore, future studies of work-related performance should include measures of employee engagement and self-efficacy but not general self-efficacy.

Overall, our study reinforces the primacy of self-efficacy, with its focus on confidence in one's competence, sense of personal agency and control and effectiveness, as a key driver of work-related performance. Without confidence, employees are less likely to engage in challenging work-related tasks, particularly where new/extra-role behavior requirements have been introduced. Without a strong sense of personal agency and control, employees are less likely to be pro-active and self-regulating, key factors when organizations expect employees to undertake new/extra-role behaviors. Without belief in their ability to achieve specific

outcomes based on taking appropriate actions, employees are unlikely to persist with these actions or expend discretionary effort to achieve organizational objectives. Enhancing self-efficacy is a critical focus for organizations seeking to improve work-related performance.

### *Study Limitations*

Although this study measured actual employee performance on work-related tasks in an organizational setting in order to address some of the shortcomings of previous research in the self-efficacy/work related performance field, there are still a number of limitations to be noted. First, performance measures were drawn from the host organization's CRM system without any validation of the reported results other than relying on the organization itself. Second, the study was undertaken with branch level employees in a financial services organization so further studies in other workplace environments are needed to be able to generalize the findings. Third, the sample size for the survey was relatively small (n=64) while the number of respondents with performance data was even smaller (n=38). Therefore, conducting a study with a larger population is needed. Fourth, we only used an abbreviated measure of the Big 5 Personality Variables so it is possible that the full inventory of items would have shown correlations with performance that would have needed to be controlled when evaluating the relationship between task-specific self-efficacy and performance. Finally, although we provided a clear rationale that general mental ability and experience did not need to be controlled, it is possible that controlling for these two variables may have mediated the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship.

## *Conclusion*

This study demonstrated the positive and important relationship between self-efficacy, employee engagement and work-related performance. From a theoretical standpoint, it makes an important contribution by demonstrating the dual influence of employee engagement and self-efficacy on actual work-related performance. Whilst management scholars have long

known about the benefits of self-efficacy for work-related performance and management practitioners have intuitively understood the value of employee engagement on organizational performance, this study has served to build a bridge between these separate communities.

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# Paper 2

## Using Theatre-Based Interventions to Boost Employee Engagement And Performance: An Innovative International Field Study


### *Abstract*

Employee engagement is increasingly being adopted as a key HR performance measure. However, there is limited empirical research on employee engagement's impact on organizational performance at the individual level of analysis. This paper describes an innovative field study in an Australian retail financial services organization that creatively used theatre-based techniques to raise employee self-efficacy to undertake a challenging, interpersonal task. Results show the intervention had a positive influence on employee engagement and that both self-efficacy and employee engagement increased performance after taking into account prior performance. The study's findings reinforce the importance of self-efficacy and employee engagement as performance predictors and key HR metrics. HR practitioners should consider using creative and innovative approaches such as theatre to enhance employee self-efficacy, raise employee engagement scores, improve organizational performance and build HR capital stock.



### *Key Words*

Employee Engagement, Self-Efficacy, Theatre-based Interventions, HR Capital Stock

### *Introduction*

In an era where tangible resources such as access to capital and technology are simply imperatives to remain in business, intangible resources such as HR capital stock are the key source of sustainable competitive advantage (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2005). Consequently, HR professionals should focus on first generating and then leveraging high-quality HR capital stock in order to enhance organizational processes and outcomes (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2005). One emerging area where HR professionals can generate HR capital stock and improve organizational performance is employee engagement. A study of 65 firms in different industries by Macey, Schneider, Barbera & Young (2009) showed that shareholder value for companies in the top quartile of employee engagement was more than double that of companies in the bottom quartile. Therefore, introducing interventions to lift employee engagement scores should boost HR capital stock and have a positive impact on a company's financial performance.

In the simplest terms, employee engagement (also known as job engagement) can be thought of as the amount of "discretionary effort", in the form of extra time, brainpower or energy, that employees exhibit at work (Towers-Perrin, 2003b). A highly engaged workforce contributes to organizational performance in two key ways (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). First, engaged employees display greater levels of affective, continuance and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996, O'Neill & Mone, 1998) that leads to lower intention to leave and higher employee retention rates. Second, the notion of capturing employee discretionary effort is analogous to the concept of work motivation where energy and effort are key drivers of individual productivity that ultimately influence organizational performance (Hunt, 1992; Pinder, 1998b). In effect, lifting employee engagement increases an organization's HR capital stock by retaining more committed and productive employees

longer. Employee engagement is therefore a critical metric for HR professionals to measure its impact on improving HR capital stock given its importance to achieving sustainable competitive advantage. The challenge for HR professionals is to develop programs and interventions that create an environment where employee engagement flourishes.

**Literature Review and Hypothesis**

Management interest in employee engagement has largely been driven by executive concerns for productivity (Macey et al., 2009). Macey and Schneider (2008) define employee engagement as "an individual's sense of purpose and focused energy, evident to others in the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward organizational goals". This definition broadens the concept of employee engagement from one with a narrow behavioural focus (discretionary effort) to one that also incorporates both affective and cognitive components (sense of purpose, initiative, and adaptability). In particular, adding an affective component suggests employee engagement is closely related to job satisfaction which has been described as 'a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences' (Locke, 1976). Although a consistent link between job satisfaction and employee retention has been established (Saari & Judge, 2004), research has consistently found little relationship between job satisfaction and performance at the individual level of analysis which limits the relevance of job satisfaction as a measure of HR and organizational performance. In contrast, the wider definition of employee engagement incorporating affective, behavioural and cognitive elements makes a direct link to both an individual's performance and intention to stay with the organization. From an HR perspective, measuring employee engagement provides practitioners with a surrogate predictor of employee retention, an important factor in building an organization's HR capital stock. Measuring employee engagement also enables HR professionals to directly monitor employee willingness to exert discretionary effort, a critical variable in employee

productivity. Therefore, measuring employee engagement provides an important means for HR professionals to demonstrate their value as business partners.

Although employee engagement is a relatively recent construct, both practitioners and researchers have long been interested in what motivates people to work. Work motivation has been defined as "the psychological processes that determine (or energize) the direction, intensity, and persistence of action within the continuing steam of experiences that characterize the person in relation to his or her work" (Kanfer, 2008). The core focus of these constructs on the direction, intensity/effort and persistence an individual displays at work closely parallels Macey and Schneider's (2008) definition of employee engagement with its focus on energy, direction, intensity and persistence of action. The similarity between employee engagement and work motivation suggests that proven work motivation tools such as goal setting and feedback and coaching that have become established HR practices will have a positive influence on employee engagement while psychological constructs such as self-efficacy are also be relevant given their proven impact on work-related performance.

To illustrate, previous meta-analyses have found the mean increase in performance when goal setting was introduced was 10% (Wood & Locke, 1987; Wood, Mento, & Locke, 1987) while introducing feedback and coaching resulted in a mean performance improvement of 14% (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). By comparison, a study of self-efficacy based interventions by Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) showed they are more impactful than goal setting or feedback and coaching interventions. This meta-analysis found a mean correlation of .35 between self-efficacy and performance that represents a 28% performance gain in performance. This gain is greater than the combined impact of goal setting and feedback and coaching, clear evidence of self-efficacy's importance in motivating individual performance. Self-efficacy is defined as "an individual's beliefs about their ability to organize and execute the courses of action

required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997) and has a generally accepted role as an important driver of work motivation and performance (Gist, 1987; Latham & Pinder, 2005). In addition, self-efficacy has been found to have very high correlations (ranging from .71 to .76) with the three dimensions of engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) as measured by the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) work engagement scale (Christian & Slaughter, 2007). Given this strong relationship between self-efficacy and employee engagement and self-efficacy's impact on work-related performance, employee engagement should positively influence work-related performance at the individual level of analysis. Therefore, assessing self-efficacy's role in lifting employee engagement is an important contribution to HR practice.

### *Self-efficacy, Motivation and Engagement*

Self-efficacy has been shown to motivate better performance on specific tasks in three ways: (1) confidence in one's competence; (2) one's sense of personal agency and control; and (3) the belief that successful performance will lead to desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Confidence in one's competence to perform a required task or function is a critical first step in motivating better performance as people who do not believe they have the requisite skill will be unlikely to demonstrate persistent and sustained energy on a given task as the likelihood of success is perceived to be low (Bandura, 2002). High levels of personal agency and control are important because they motivate better performance through greater self-organization, pro-activity, self-regulation and self-reflection (Bandura, 1986). Finally, individuals who feel ineffective and unsupported in their environment are unlikely to persist in their action if they believe these actions will not lead to desired outcomes. As a result, self-efficacy motivates better performance when an individual perceives their social environment aids their ability to achieve certain outcomes (Bandura, 1991). In summary, motivating better performance will be governed by the strength of an individual's self-efficacy belief through these three factors.

A cornerstone tenet to employee engagement is that employees must first believe that they have the capacity, reason or motivation, freedom and knowledge to engage (Macey et al., 2009). To the extent that employees do not believe they have these factors, organizations need to initiate programs and design interventions that instil these beliefs in order to increase employee engagement scores. Programs and interventions focused on increasing employee self-efficacy will address three of these factors directly. First, an employee's capacity to engage will increase as they develop a greater sense of confidence in their competence at the necessary specific tasks required to fully discharge their work responsibilities. Second, raising an employee's self-efficacy leads to a virtuous circle of setting more challenging goals and in turn the corresponding motivation to reach those goals increases just as goal setting theory predicts (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984). Third, increasing self-efficacy beliefs enhances an employee's sense of their personal agency and control which leads to them perceiving they have more freedom to engage. Therefore, the combination of confidence in one's competence, motivation via goal-setting and sense of personal agency and control provide three of the four factors needed to build a platform for employees to become engaged. The fourth factor, knowledge to engage, relies on the employee's organization to provide the information they need so that they can clearly see how their work is aligned with the organization's strategy. Internal communications and helping employees understand how their role contributes to the organization's strategy are crucial components of an effective employee engagement initiative (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). In summary, self-efficacy is strongly linked to employee engagement and leads to the first hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 1*. Employee engagement is positively related to self-efficacy and work-related performance measured at the individual level of analysis.

*Self-efficacy interventions and HR*

The importance of self-efficacy in motivating better performance is well established (Gist & Mitchell, 1992) and is a core component of Locke and Latham's model of work motivation (Locke & Latham, 2004). Indeed the widespread popularity of self-efficacy as a research topic is evidenced by the nearly 3,000 studies that were originally identified in two meta analysis (Judge et al., 2007; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998) as potentially meeting the criteria for inclusion. Self-efficacy's specific relevance to HR was first identified by Gist (1987) who argued that self-efficacy had specific implications for a wide range of HR issues including: selection; leadership; training and vocational counseling; equal employment opportunity; performance appraisals, goals, and incentives; and group and organizational performance. However, in spite of the comprehensiveness nature of these topics, self-efficacy's proven relationship with work-related performance and Gist's (1987) call for research to determine the extent to which self-efficacy is relevant to human resource management, there have been relatively few self-efficacy articles published in HRM. A keyword search in January 2010 of the HRM database found 34 articles with self-efficacy as the key word, virtually identical to goal setting (33). By comparison, there were 97 articles with selection as the key word; 281 with leadership; 442 with training or training and development; 80 with performance appraisal; and 489 with performance. In addition, a library review of human resource management textbooks found self-efficacy was frequently un-referenced. In the relatively few instances where self-efficacy was referenced, it was only in relation to training or behavior modeling. Given self-efficacy's relationship with work-related performance and employee engagement and its potential to build HR capital stock, greater focus on self-efficacy in HR is urgently needed.

*Training interventions to enhance self-efficacy*

In order to increase employee self-efficacy, interventions need to provide employees with opportunities to enhance their self-efficacy beliefs by focusing on the four principal sources of

self-efficacy information: enactive mastery experiences; vicarious experiences; verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences; and physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1997). Enactive mastery experiences (i.e. the experience of successfully performing a task), build employee feelings of competency in their perceived skill to perform a required task or function (Bandura, 2002). Allowing people to learn by watching role models and then modelling their own behaviour on successful performance provides vicarious experiences while using a feedback and coaching process to address participant perceptions of how the social environment impacts their ability to achieve certain outcomes illustrates the verbal persuasion in action (Bandura, 1991). Finally, providing a low stress environment where participant's physical and affective states are raised increases the likelihood self-efficacy information will be transferred. An intervention incorporating any of these four sources of self-efficacy information would assist in the process of increasing participant self-efficacy. However, the ideal intervention would involve two, three or all four sources in order to maximize participants' sense of their confidence in their competence to perform a challenging task and produce given attainments. In addition, interventions should also heighten participant's sense of their personal agency and control – their belief in their ability to be self-organizing, pro-active, self-regulating, and self-reflecting, and not simply be an onlooker to their behaviour (Bandura, 2006). To summarize, employees who feel confident, agentic and effective (i.e. more self-efficacious) are more likely to be engaged in their jobs which in turn improves employee retention and organizational performance.

One novel and communicative medium-based format that is generating considerable academic and practitioner interest as an interventional tool is organizational theatre (Schreyögg & Häpfl, 2004). Organizational theatre provides a creative and innovative way of helping the audience (employees) see their own reality in new ways by observing the familiar from an unfamiliar angle, enabling them to view two different realities simultaneously and providing

them with a *splitting experience* (Schreyögg, 2001). This process of observation has been described as the theory of second order observation and brings about *reality duplication* (Luhmann, 1998) and enables employees to talk *about* what they normally talk about and promote generative conversations (Meisiek & Barry, 2005). In effect, theatre opens up new possibilities. The next section highlights the potential for three drama based formats (Forum Theatre, Rehearse for Reality, and Entertainment Education) as creative and innovative interventions to positively influence participants' beliefs in their sense of personal agency and control, confidence in their competence to undertake challenging tasks and ability to achieve effective outcomes.

**Forum Theatre**

Forum Theatre (Boal, 2000) is a form of simultaneous dramaturgy where participants (spect-actors) watch a scripted performance and then participate in analysing the performance and coaching the actors on different ways of constructing it. Rather than watching actors perform a play, employees actually observe the result of observations others (i.e. the actors and script writers) have made about their organization. By confronting employees with a different perspective, they take a fresh look at how they do things and how they see their work. As a result, employees feel a greater sense of their own responsibility to undertake tasks and are more willing and able to become engaged in their work. Forum Theatre enhances participant self-efficacy in two ways. The conflict, contradiction, confrontation and defiance exhibited during the performance first acts to stimulate participant's sense of their own personal agency. Second, as observers participants have the opportunity to learn vicariously by watching the actors perform scenes and then scrutinize the interaction between the actors and spect-actors. In effect, Forum Theatre acts as both a catalyst for change while offering a vehicle to learn new behaviours that set it apart as a drama-based technology.

**Rehearse for Reality (Business Simulation)**

In contrast to traditional role-play business simulations where learners take on the roles of specific characters in a contrived setting, Rehearse for Reality role-plays involve employees playing themselves in realistic settings such as having a conversation with another employee or presenting to a group. In Rehearse for Reality, a professional actor/coach gets the participant to describe the background, purpose of the conversation and any personal characteristics about the individual that the actor will play in the simulated conversation. Because of their own training, actors are able to connect the emotion/motivation they display in the conversation to a value or belief their character holds and that participants need to address in order to achieve successful outcomes. This form of role play enables participants to experience a heightened physiological and affective state and engage in a realistic and genuine conversation where they directly gain practice at managing both the conversation's cognitive elements and its emotional context. As Rehearse for Reality simulations are typically undertaken in small groups of 5-6 people, employees also enhance their self-efficacy by observational learning, through feedback and coaching and by being in a heightened physiological and affective state. Therefore, Rehearse for Reality offers a rich technology for enhancing participant self-efficacy.

**Entertainment Education**

Defined as the intentional placement of educational content in entertainment messages (Singhal & Rogers, 2002), entertainment-education (E-E) has traditionally been used as a public health oriented vehicle for mass market education, typically through radio or television serials. E-E has its theoretical roots in social learning (now social cognitive) theory with its focus on seeking to influence audience behavioural change by showing rather than describing positive and negative role models to the target audience (Singhal, 2004). As a non-participatory process, E-E relies primarily on enhancing individual self-efficacy through vicarious learning rather than enactive mastery practice or feedback and coaching as occurs in

Forum Theatre and Rehearse for Reality. Given the difficulties faced by participants seeking to adopt new behaviours on challenging tasks, Bandura (personal communication, August 2, 2007) has suggested that E-E can be used as a self-efficacy reinforcement mechanism for interventions such as Forum Theatre until new behaviours become habitual. Therefore, E-E can perhaps best be described as a reflective narrative that acts as both a primary and secondary behavioural change agent.

In summary, these three theatre based formats provide an innovative approach to increasing employee agency, confidence and effectiveness and leads to the second hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 2a.* An organisational theatre intervention will have a positive influence on self-efficacy, employee engagement and work-related performance

*Hypothesis 2b.* Self-efficacy and employee engagement will mediate the increase in work-related performance caused by the intervention.

## *Research Method*

### Setting and Subjects

An independently branded retail unit of an Australasian financial services organization had implemented a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system as part of a strategic push to strengthen customer relationships. To achieve this objective, branch employees were encouraged to use the CRM system to identify eligible customers for a free financial 'health check' appointment with the employee. The employee's task was to proactively ask the customer during the course of a regular over the counter (OTC) transaction to attend an appointment. Although there was a positive trend in the number of appointments being made, budgets were not being met and lack of confidence to approach customers for an appointment was identified as a contributing factor. Twenty mid-sized branches from a large metropolitan

city were selected to participate in the study with matched pairs of branches randomly assigned to either a Pilot or Control group.

**Method**

The Pilot group participated in an intervention specifically designed to increase appointment making self-efficacy. The intervention took place over an eight month period. Two half day workshops (one month apart) formed the intervention's core. The first workshop used Forum Theater, structured reflection time and goal oriented personal action plans to help participant's re-frame their perspectives of both their roles and customer needs while the second workshop used the 'Rehearse for Reality' process to give participants the opportunity to practice proactive customer conversations. Four months after the workshops, a three part DVD series depicting the Forum Theater characters exploring proactive customer conversations in a different setting was played at the weekly branch team development meeting. Each part ran for approximately 5 minutes and were played only once over three consecutive weeks at the start of the weekly meeting followed by a discussion led by either the branch manager or supervisor.

Surveys were administered to employees from both the Pilot and Control Groups at two points in time. The Time 1 survey (107 respondents) was collected in early October 2007 prior to the first workshop and the Time 2 survey (64 respondents) was collected in late May 2008 two months after the DVD's were played. The overall response rate was 87% (95% for the Pilot Group and 78% for the Control Group) on the Time 1 survey and 54% (58% for the Pilot Group and 50% for the Control Group) on the Time 2 survey. The lower response rate on the Time 2 survey was due to a combination of employee attrition, internal branch transfers and the announcement of a proposed corporate merger one week prior to the post-intervention survey being posted online. In particular, the proposed merger appeared to contribute to the low response rate as separate surveys undertaken by the host organization showed significant employee disenchantment with the prospect of going through a third

merger in a decade. The Time 1 survey contained two parts: Part A was part of a larger survey assessing a range of employee traits, perceptions and attitudes; Part B collected perceptions of task self-efficacy at a single performance level. The Time 2 survey was a smaller repeated measures survey of items from Parts A and B and also collected perceptions of task self-efficacy at six performance levels.

### *Measures*

*Work-Related Performance.* The number of appointments made and products sold by branch employees were extracted from the CRM system as the two key measures of work-related performance. Making appointments with customers during an OTC conversation required discretionary effort from the branch employee and was therefore an ideal performance measure to tangibly gauge employee engagement. Historically, the number of products sold was directly proportional to the number of appointments made and therefore provided the means to judge the financial impact of the intervention. To align performance data with survey responses, performance data from the first quarter (October to December) of the financial year (when the two workshops were held) was set as Time 1 and performance data from the third quarter (April to June) of the financial year (after the DVD's were played) was set as Time 2.

*Self-Efficacy.* Self-efficacy measures should be specific to the domain of interest and designed to capture the multifaceted nature of behavior and the context in which it occurs (Maddux & Gosselin, 2003). Bandura (1997) recommends conducting interviews with people for whom the domain of interest is relevant. After initially interviewing management and reviewing sales-related job competencies for customer contact service employee, ten employees (Three branch managers, three supervisors and four customer service officers) from four branches were interviewed to capture specific behavioral and contextual issues relevant to sales-related tasks. The format was based on Bandura's "Guide for Constructing Self Efficacy Scales" (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). Twenty-one, single level performance task

self-efficacy items using the 100 point Grid system were developed. The measure was piloted with three employees and no significant comprehension issues were identified. A typical item asked respondents to rate their degree of confidence from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) to: "Ask a customer an open-ended question when an opportunity arises during an over the counter transaction". The first key self-efficacy item (Ask Customer for Appointment Single SE) asked respondents to rate their confidence to ask a customer to come in for an appointment during an OTC Transaction and was directly related to the 'Number of Appointments Made' performance measure. The second key self-efficacy item (Ask for Business Single SE) asked respondents to rate their confidence to ask a customer for their business during the Appointment and was directly related to the 'Number of Products Sold' performance measure.

On the post-intervention survey, multiple level performance task self-efficacy items with increasing degrees of difficulty ranging from very easy to very hard were introduced in addition to the single level performance items. For example, the open-ended item described above was re-formatted into six performance levels by asking employees to: "Rate your level of confidence from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) during a routine OTC conversation to ask a customer: At least 1 open-ended question (Level 1); At least 3 open-ended questions (Level 2); At least 5 open-ended questions (Level 3); At least 10 open-ended questions (Level 4); At least 15 open-ended questions (Level 5); and At least 20 open-ended questions (Level 6)". The first multiple-levels of performance self-efficacy item asked respondents to rate their confidence to make an appointment with a customer during an OTC Transaction (Making Appointments Multiple SE). This item was directly related to 'Number of Appointments Made'. The second multiple-levels of performance self-efficacy item asked respondents to rate their confidence to ask the customer for their business during an appointment (Ask for Business Multiple SE). This item was directly related to 'Number of Products Sold'. Exploratory factor analysis yielded a two factor model for each multiple levels of

performance measure: Hard (3 levels) and Easy (3 levels). For example, the 'Making Appointments Hard' factor had an initial Eigen value of 4.5 and explained 76% of the variance while the 'Making Appointments Easy' factor had an initial Eigen value of 1.0 and explained an additional 17% of the variance. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for 'Making Appointments Hard' yielded a KMO value of .70 and the Bartlett value was statistically significant. A composite measure of self-efficacy for these two multiple level performance items was then developed by calculating the mean of the three most difficult levels of performance.

*Employee Engagement*. The 9-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006) was used to measure Employee Engagement. This scale contains three sub-scales (Energy, Absorption and Dedication). All scales and sub-scales showed Cronbach's alpha ranging from .70 to .83 at Time 1 and .85 to .87 at Time 2 and are virtually identical to those reported in the literature (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

## *Results*

Table 1 displays the Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for the range of Self-Efficacy, Engagement and Performance measures at Time 1 and Time 2.

**Insert Table 1 about here**

### *Self-Efficacy, Engagement and Performance*

Table 1 shows that the two single level performance Self-Efficacy items (Ask Customer for Appointment Single SE and Ask for Business Single SE) are highly significantly correlated with Employee Engagement (p=0.01) at both Time 1 and Time 2 while the two composite Self-Efficacy measures (Make Appointments Hard and Ask for Business Hard) were highly significantly correlated with Employee Engagement (p=0.01) at Time 2 (the only time they

were measured. With respect to Performance, neither measure was correlated with Self-Efficacy or Employee Engagement at Time 1. However, at Time 2 the Number of Appointments Made was highly significantly correlated (p=0.01) with composite Self Efficacy (Make Appointments Hard); significantly correlated (p=0.05) with single level performance (Ask Customer for Appointment Single SE); and highly significantly correlated (p=0.01) with Employee Engagement. Similarly, at Time 2, the Number of Products Sold was significantly correlated (p=0.05) with composite Self Efficacy (Ask for Business Hard) and Employee Engagement but not with single level performance ('Ask Customer for Appointment Single SE' and 'Ask for Business Single SE'). Overall, the correlations between Self-Efficacy, Employee Engagement and Performance support Hypothesis 1: Employee engagement is positively related to self-efficacy and work-related performance measured at the individual level of analysis.

Hierarchical regression analysis was then used to test for the predictive influence of Self-Efficacy and Employee Engagement on Performance. The distribution of the performance data was first checked for normality as applying linear regression analysis to count data can be problematic (Gardner et al., 1995). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was non-significant (p=.200) at both Time 1 and Time 2, indicating the data was normally distributed. In order to predict performance at Time 2, Time 1 performance was regressed at the first step, the relevant composite measure of Self-Efficacy was regressed at the second step and Employee Engagement was regressed at the third step (See Table 2). With respect to predicting the Number of Appointments Made, past performance was the best predictor of future performance with Adj. $R^2$ of .216 (p=0.002). The introduction of Make Appointments Hard at the second step showed an incremental Adj. $R^2$ of .119 (p=0.010) while the introduction of Employee Engagement at the third step had an incremental Adj. $R^2$ of .050 (p=0.058). Overall, these three variables predicted 38.5% of the variability in Time 2 Performance with

Time 1 performance highly significant (β = .418, p=0.003), Make Appointments Hard significant (β = .283, p=0.046) and Employee Engagement weakly significant (β = .270, p=0.058) in the final model. With respect to predicting the Number of Products Sold, past performance predicted future performance at the first step with Adj. $R^2$ of .114 (p=0.039). The introduction of Ask for Business Hard at the second step showed an incremental Adj. $R^2$ of .097 (p=0.027) while the introduction of Employee Engagement at the third step had an incremental Adj. $R^2$ of .053 (p=0.073). Overall, these three variables predicted 23.9% of the variability in Time 2 Performance with all three variables being weakly significant (from p=0.062 to 0.087) in the final model. Based on an Alpha level of 0.05, the three predictors in the regression analysis, Observed $R^2$ of 0.435 and the 38 valid cases, the observed power of the regression analysis was a highly significant 0.995. Therefore, Self-Efficacy and Employee Engagement act as independent predictors of future performance when past performance is taken into account.

**Insert Table 2 about here**

*Impact of Intervention on Self-Efficacy, Engagement and Performance*

*Self-Efficacy.* Table 1 shows the overall mean for 'Ask Customer for Appointment Single SE' decreased from 83.2 to 70.9 from Time 1 to Time 2. A mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance was conducted to assess the impact of the intervention on this measure of participant self-efficacy. Figure 1 shows there was a highly significant main effect for time (Wilks Lambda = .71, $F$ (1, 55) =23.06, p <.0005) as well as a significant interaction effect for group (Wilks Lambda = .91, $F$ (1, 55) =5.34, p=0.025) with the mean for the pilot group decreasing from 78.6 to 72.2 while the mean for the control group decreased from 86.2 to 68.0. An independent samples t-test was conducted and there was no significant difference in 'Ask Customer for Appointment Single SE' between the pilot and control group

at either Time 1 (p=.122) or Time 2 (p=.430). None of the other measures of self-efficacy (including 'Ask for Business Single SE) showed a significant interaction effect. Therefore, the intervention appeared to buffer the decrease in the target self-efficacy variable ('Ask Customer for Appointment Single SE') for the pilot group compared to the control group. The decrease in the means for both groups appeared to reflect environmental influences such as the proposed corporate merger on employee perceptions of their self-efficacy.

**Insert Figure 1 about here**

*Employee Engagement.* Table 1 shows the overall mean for Employee Engagement decreased from 4.75 to 4.12 from Time 1 to Time 2. A mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance was conducted to assess the impact of the intervention on Employee Engagement. Figure 2 shows there was a highly significant main effect for time (Wilks Lambda = .61, $F$ (1, 50) =32.28, p <.0005) as well as a significant interaction effect for group (Wilks Lambda = .92, $F$ (1, 50) =4.13, p=0.048) for Employee Engagement with the mean for the pilot group decreasing from 4.63 to 4.21 while the mean for the control group decreased from 4.90 to 4.01. Figure 2 also shows there were highly significant main effects for time (Wilks Lambda = .72, $F$ (1, 50) =19.71, p <.0005) and interaction effects for group (Wilks Lambda = .88, $F$ (1, 50) =7.06, p=0.010) for the Absorption sub-scale with the mean for the pilot group decreasing from 4.46 to 4.25 while the mean for the control group decreased from 4.86 to 3.94. In contrast, Figure 2 shows there was no interaction effect for group (Wilks Lambda = .99, $F$ (1, 50) =0.56, p=0.457) for the Dedication sub-scale although there was a highly significant main effect for time (Wilks Lambda = .64, $F$ (1, 50) =28.45, p <.0005). An independent samples t-test was conducted for Employee Engagement, Absorption and Dedication and there was no significant difference between the pilot and control groups at either Time 1 (p=.314; p=.174; p=.785 respectively) or Time 2 (p=.440; p=.271; p=.662

respectively). Therefore, the intervention buffered the decrease in the Absorption sub-scale in particular as well as for Employee Engagement overall for the pilot group compared to the control group.

**Insert Figure 2 about here**

*Performance.* Table 1 shows the overall means for Appointments Made and Products Sold increased from 21.7 to 30.2 and 9.7 to 14.2 respectively from Time 1 to Time 2. A mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance was conducted to assess the impact of the intervention on these two performance measures. Figure 3 shows there was a highly significant main effect for time (Wilks Lambda = .81, $F$ (1, 79) =19.18, p <.0005) as well as a significant interaction effect for group (Wilks Lambda = .94, $F$ (1, 79) =5.28, p=0.024) for Appointments Made with the mean for the pilot group increasing from 22.7 to 36.0 while the mean for the control group increased from 20.8 to 24.9. With respect to Products Sold, there was a highly significant main effect for time (Wilks Lambda = .81, $F$ (1, 79) =19.12, p <.0005) but no interaction effect for group (Wilks Lambda = .98, $F$ (1, 79) =1.75, p=0.190) with the mean for the pilot group increasing from 10.6 to 16.5 while the mean for the control group increased from 9.0 to 12.1. An independent samples t-test was conducted for Appointments Made and Products Sold and there was no significant difference between the pilot and control group at either Time 1 (p=.729; and p=.544 respectively) or Time 2 (p=.129; and p=.212 respectively). Therefore, the intervention had a significant positive impact on Appointments Made but not Products Sold.

**Insert Figure 3 about here**

Overall, the above results support Hypothesis 2a - an organisational theatre intervention has a positive influence on self-efficacy, employee engagement and work-related performance. In order to test for self-efficacy and employee engagement as mediators in the intervention/work-related performance relationships, only pilot group cases were selected for correlation and mediation analysis. In order to test for mediation, three regression equations are required (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Equation 1 must demonstrate the independent variable is related to the mediating variable. Table 2 shows the correlations between the independent variable (Ask Customer for Appointment at Time 1) and three alternative mediating variables: Ask Customer for Appointment at Time 2; Make Appointments Hard Composite SE and Employee Engagement at Time 2. The correlation for Ask Customer for Appointment at Time 1 is significant for the Pilot Group only. In addition, although the correlations between the other two mediating variables and the independent variable are not significant due to the low number (16) of respondents, the $\beta$ values for both are over .300. Equation 2 must demonstrate the independent variable is related to the dependent variable. Table 2 shows that the correlations between independent variable (Ask Customer for Appointment at Time 1) and the dependent variable (Appointments Made) is significant (p=0.056) for the pilot group only. Finally, Equation 3 must demonstrate that the mediating variable is related to the dependent variable when the dependent variable is regressed on both the independent and mediating variables. Table 4 shows that Make Appointments Hard Composite SE is weakly significant (p=0.097) for the pilot group whereas it is not significant for the control group. Therefore, it appears that the increase in performance was attributable to the increase in self-efficacy arising from the intervention. In addition, although employee engagement was not a significant mediator of the intervention/performance relationship, the $\beta$ value was over .300, suggesting that a higher number of respondents would have also made employee engagement a mediator.

Overall, the results support Hypothesis 2: an intervention designed to increase employee self-efficacy will boost employee engagement and performance. Although there was an overall decrease in Self-Efficacy, Employee Engagement, Absorption and Dedication from Time 1 to Time 2, there were significant interaction effects showing the pilot group's results were buffered by the intervention. Finally, the Number of Appointments Made by the pilot group increased significantly compared to the control group.

### *Discussion*

As the search for sustainable competitive advantage increasingly focuses on people, HR practitioners need to identify and implement ways to generate and then leverage their organization's HR capital stock. One key metric to track HR's success in building their organization's HR capital stock is employee engagement. Higher levels of employee engagement translate to superior financial performance through greater employee productivity and retention. However while it is straightforward to set increasing employee engagement as a strategic goal for HR, putting programs in place to help meet this goal is another matter altogether. This study sets out an innovative and creative way to increase employee engagement at the individual level that in turn will lead to higher employee engagement overall.

Our study demonstrated that employee perceptions of their self-efficacy on challenging tasks are strongly correlated to employee engagement and work-related performance with the composite measures of self-efficacy being significantly correlated with their matching performance measure. In addition, the hierarchical regression analysis not only showed that performance, self-efficacy and employee engagement are correlated but that between 24 and 38% of variability in future performance is explained by past performance, self-efficacy and employee engagement. Each of these factors was statistically significant and reinforces the importance of self-efficacy and employee engagement in driving performance individual

performance. Critically, although self-efficacy and employee engagement are theoretically linked and highly significantly correlated, they independently predict performance and are therefore both important factors for HR professionals to focus on in order to lift work-related performance.

The decrease in single level performance task self-efficacy from Time 1 to Time 2 was unexpected. However, it appears to have been caused by environmental factors as the decrease occurred in both the Pilot and Control Groups. The first environmental factor that changed was economic. The Time 1 survey was conducted in October 2007 during the height of the recent economic boom in Australia while the Time 2 survey was conducted in May 2008 as interest rates and unemployment rose and housing prices had peaked and were set to fall. Therefore, the environment for customers potentially being interested in a financial health check appointment had been altered. Secondly, the proposed corporate merger had a significant negative impact on employee engagement scores which suggests the proposed merger did have an adverse effect on employee attitudes that contributed to lower self-efficacy. Independent data collected by the host organization confirmed that employee attitudes were adversely affected by the merger's announcement, particularly as this unit of the company had been through two previous mergers over the past 15 years. Given that self-efficacy is influenced by the continual interaction between personal characteristics, behavior and the environment, it is indeed very plausible that these two environmental factors were the primary cause of the lower scores.

With respect to the intervention, the significant interaction effects found for both the 'Ask the Customer for an Appointment SE', Employee Engagement and Number of Appointments Made confirms the intervention did have a positive impact on participants. A closer

examination of Employee Engagement's three sub-scales and the reported scores provides additional although admittedly tentative evidence that the intervention positively influenced self-efficacy. The original UWES scale was developed as the positive antithesis of job burnout (Maslach, 2001) and the three sub-scales were labeled: Exhaustion, Cynicism and Inefficacy/Ineffectiveness. In effect, Vigor is a reverse measure of Exhaustion, Dedication is a reverse measure of Cynicism and Absorption is a reverse measure of Inefficacy/Ineffectiveness. Therefore, the highly significant interaction effect ($p=0.01$) for Absorption (the reverse measure of Inefficacy/Ineffectiveness) shows that the pilot group's score fell at a much lower rate compared to the control group. Although absorption is not the same construct as task self-efficacy, this finding provides supplementary support for the intervention having had a positive impact on self-efficacy. The positive influence of the intervention is further demonstrated by the fact that the mean score for both the pilot and control group's decreased at close to an identical rate and there was no interaction effect for Dedication (the reverse of Cynicism). Given the merger announcement had a negative influence on employee attitudes, the decline in Dedication for both groups is not surprising. In summary, although there was a clear decrease in reported levels of self-efficacy and engagement that appear to be a direct reflection of the proposed merger announcement, the interaction effects between the two groups on self-efficacy, engagement and performance suggest that the intervention had a buffering impact on the pilot group.

### *Study Limitations*

A number of limitations should be noted. First, performance measures were drawn exclusively from the host organization's CRM system and therefore the analysis is premised on the accuracy of this data. Second, performance results were only analyzed for employees who had worked in their position at the same branch for at least a two year period (the year prior to and the year of the study). Finally, the study was conducted in a retail financial

services organization and should be replicated in other workplace environments prior to generalizing the findings.

### *Conclusion*

This study highlights the use of creative and innovative interventions to improve employee engagement and performance. Theatre-based interventions in particular offer a unique means to help employee's gain greater confidence and a stronger sense of personal agency and control to undertake challenging tasks. By helping employees to first develop their belief in their self-efficacy, HR professionals can increase their organization's HR capital stock through improved employee engagement scores. Ultimately, the more self-confident and engaged employees are, the better organization performance will be.

## *FIGURES AND TABLES*

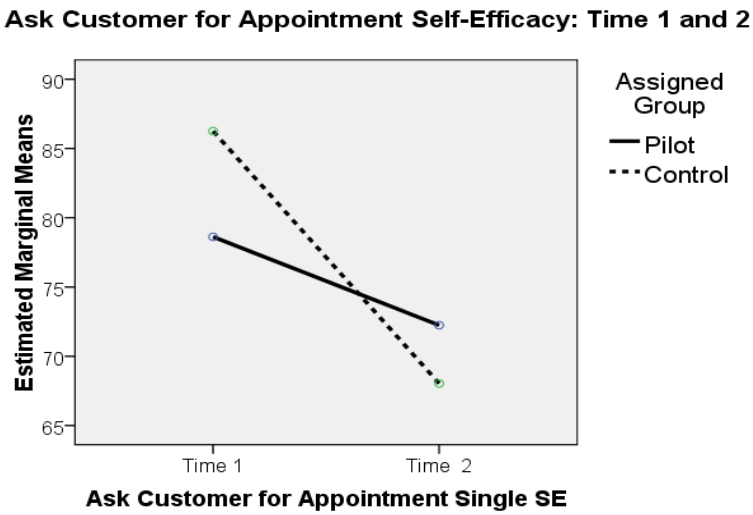


**FIGURE 1**. Ask Customer for Appointment Self-Efficacy: Time 1 and 2.

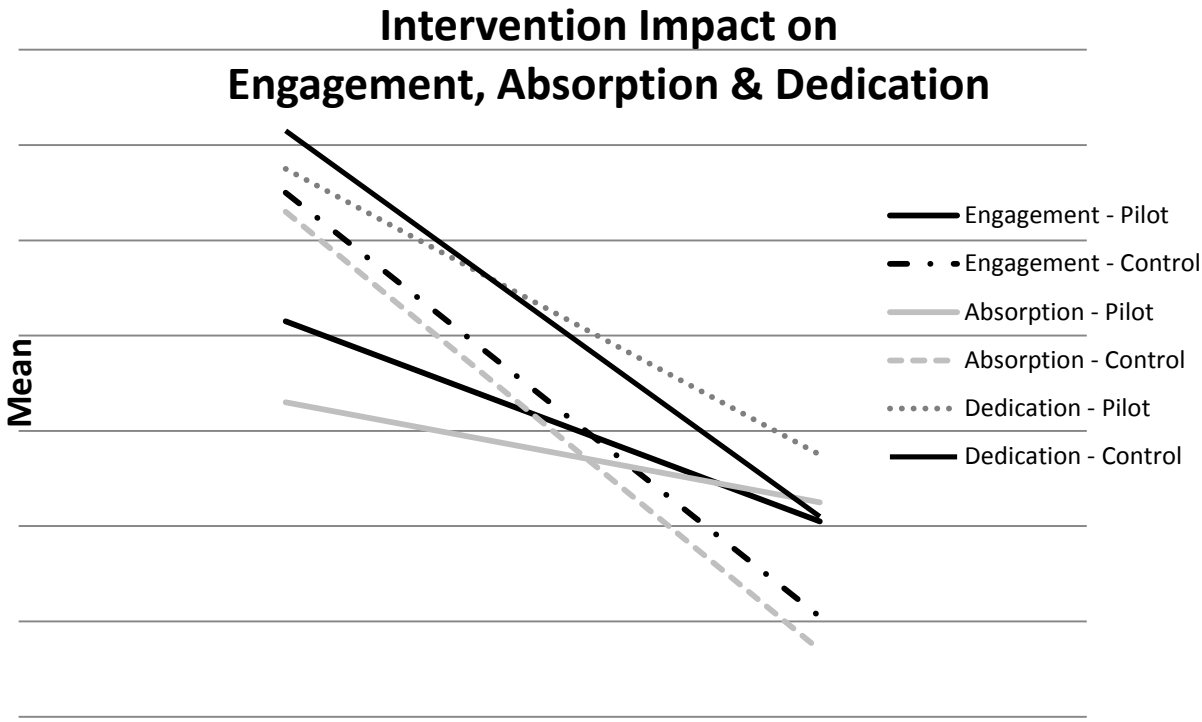


**FIGURE 2**. Employee Engagement and Absorption – Time 1 and 2.

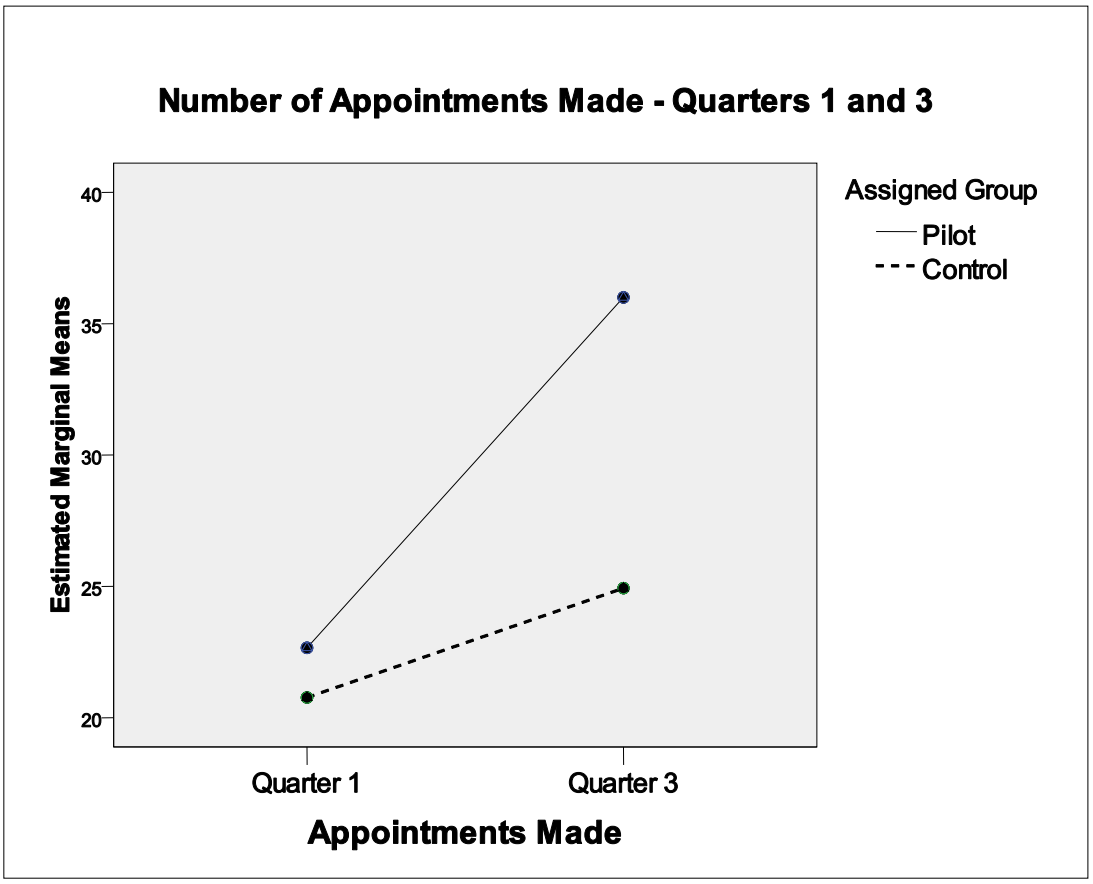


**FIGURE 3**. Number of Appointments Made – Quarter 1 and 3.

## TABLE I Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Variables (N=107 Time 1 and N=64 Time 2)

| *Variable* | *M T1* | *SD T1* | *M T2* | *SD T2* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ask Customer for App't Single SE | 83.2 | 18.9 | 70.9 | 19.7 | - | .565** | .360** | .327** | .529** | .479** | .479** | .514** | 377* | .321* |
| 2. Ask for Business Single SE | 91.1 | 12.7 | 86.6 | 15.1 | .558** | - | .337** | .297* | .412** | .369** | .401** | .375** | .085 | .078 |
| 3. Make App't Hard Composite SE | - | - | 35.3 | 27.7 | - | - | - | .452** | .387** | .436** | .289* | .357** | .424** | .293X |
| 4. Ask for Business Hard Composite SE | - | - | 48.5 | 27.4 | - | - | - | - | .375** | .386** | .284* | .376** | .253 | .357* |
| 5. Engagement | 4.75 | 0.93 | 4.12 | 0.89 | .482** | .333** | - | - | - | .907** | .926** | .948** | .434** | .373* |
| 6. Vigor | 4.59 | 1.15 | 3.93 | 0.90 | .449** | .276** | - | - | .901** | - | .736** | .800** | .453** | .376* |
| 7. Absorption | 4.65 | 1.04 | 4.12 | 0.98 | .416** | .345** | - | - | .850** | .616** | - | .829** | .334* | .250 |
| 8. Dedication | 4.97 | 0.97 | 4.30 | 0.99 | .393** | .254* | - | - | .898** | .745** | .650** | - | .423** | .413** |
| 9. Appointments Made | 21.7 | 24.3 | 30.2 | 32.7 | .049 | .004 | - | - | .069 | .116 | .019 | .048 | - | .852** |
| 10. Products Sold | 9.7 | 11.9 | 14.2 | 15.7 | -.087 | -.160 | - | - | -.160 | -.030 | -.209 | -.223 | .879** | - |

Note: Self-Efficacy and Engagement values below diagonal are from Time 1 survey; Values above diagonal are from Time 2 survey. Performance values below the diagonal are for Quarter 1; Values above diagonal are for Quarter 3. ** p≤ 0.01 * p≤ 0.05 X p≤ 0.10

## TABLE I( Key Correlations For Pilot and Control Group

| | *Pilot (Intervention)* | | | | | *Control (No Intervention)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Variable* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Ask Customer for App't Single SE (T1) | - | | | | | - | | | | |
| 2. Ask Customer for App't Single SE (T2) | **.600**** | - | | | | **.392** | - | | | |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .008 | | | | | .149 | | | | |
| 3. Make App't Hard Composite SE (T2) | **.336** | **.790**** | - | | | **.362** | **.041** | - | | |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .173 | .000 | | | | .185 | .885 | | | |
| 4. Employee Engagement (T2) | **.342** | **.492*** | **.388** | - | | **.183** | **.428** | **.392** | - | |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .164 | .038 | .112 | | | .514 | .111 | .149 | | |
| 5. Number of Appointments Made (T2) | **.458X** | **.275** | **.507*** | **.460X** | - | **.193** | **.608*** | **.302** | **.433** | - |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .056 | .270 | .032 | .055 | | .491 | .016 | .274 | .107 | |

**TABLE III** **Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Time 2 Performance Controlling for Time 1 Performance – Composite Task Specific Self-Efficacy and Employee Engagement**

| Variable | Step 1 | | Step 2 | | Step 3 | | Sig. F Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **APPOINTMENTS MADE - TIME 2** | ***Adj. $R^2$*** | $\Delta R^2$ | ***Adj. $R^2$*** | $\Delta R^2$ | ***Adj. $R^2$*** | $\Delta R^2$ | |
| Appointments Made Time 1 | .216 | .237** | | | | | .002 |
| Make Appointment Hard Composite SE | | | .335 | .134** | | | .010 |
| Employee Engagement | | | | | .385 | .064$^{X}$ | .058 |
| **PRODUCTS SOLD - TIME 2** | | | | | | | |
| Products Sold Time 1 | .089 | .114* | | | | | .039 |
| Ask for Business Hard Composite SE | | | .186 | .117* | | | .027 |
| Employee Engagement | | | | | .239 | .070$^{X}$ | .073 |

Note: ** p≤ 0.01 * p≤ 0.05 X p≤ 0.10

**TABLE IV** **Mediation Analysis of Self-Efficacy and Employee Engagement on Appointments Made**

| Appointments Made T2 (DV) | *R* | $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ | *F(df)* | IV SE β | Sig. | MV SE β | Sig. | MV EE β | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pilot Group (Intervention)** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ask for Appointment SE (IV) | .46 | .210 | .210 | 4.26$^{X}$ (1,16) | **.458$^{X}$** | **.056** | | | | |
| Making Appointments Hard SE (MV) | .59 | .350 | .264 | | .325 | .162 | **.397$^{X}$** | **.097** | | |
| Employee Engagement T2 (MV) | .63 | .398 | .048 | | .267 | .260 | .322 | .185 | .244 | .311 |
| **Control Group (No Intervention)** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ask for Appointment SE (IV) | .19 | .037 | .037 | .502$^{X}$ (1,13) | .193 | .491 | | | | |
| Making Appointments Hard SE (MV) | .32 | .099 | .062 | | .096 | .749 | .267 | .382 | | |
| Employee Engagement T2 (MV) | .46 | .213 | .114 | | .079 | .789 | .129 | .682 | .368 | .233 |

** Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). X Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).

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# Paper 3

## Empowerment or Control: A Longitudinal Experimental Field Study of the Effects of Organization Theatre


### *ABSTRACT*

Interest in Organization Theatre (OT) continues to grow. Supporters claim OT has significant potential to create an open and reflective 'aesthetic space' that contributes to overcoming employee powerlessness while critics see OT as a manipulative form of 'corporate theatre' embodying a restrictive agenda that channels employee energy and attention onto management issues only. To date there have been no in-depth controlled studies of OT's effects. This paper reports on the first such field experiment and is designed to test both parties' claims.

The study explored the effect of an OT intervention on both narrower and broader dimensions of employee's sense of self-efficacy, esteem and control that are key factors in 'motivational' approaches to empowerment. Concurrently, it investigated OT's effects on narrower and broader forms of 'soft' control such as personal control through emotional labor. The findings support that it is possible to have both increased empowerment *and* control and questions the stronger suggestions made by supporters and critics for the existence of major significant developments in either empowerment or soft control as a result of an OT intervention.

## *Introduction: From Self-Efficacy to Empowerment in a Field Study*

"The field of theatre *in* organizations is still in its infancy."

(Schreyögg & Häpfl, 2004, p. 699)

In 2007, a longitudinal experimental study was undertaken to provide the first rigorous field test of Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory of self-efficacy and its predicted beneficial effects on employee performance in work-related settings. A specialist learning company was contracted to undertake a 'forum theatre' based intervention designed to improve the self-efficacy beliefs of bank branch employees in their customer interactions. Not only did the intervention lead to a significant increase in employee self-efficacy, but this was closely associated with predicted improvements in performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), and well-being (Ozer & Bandura, 1990; Salanova et al., 2010).

What emerged in the course of the study, however, was that the data collected during the field experiment had the potential to make a valuable contribution to another area of burgeoning intellectual inquiry: whether Organizational Theatre (OT) acts as a learning intervention that contributes to increasing employee empowerment (Schreyögg & Häpfl, 2004). A growing interest in this use of OT has been accompanied by a wide range of empirical studies (Matula, 2009) ranging from impressionistic case studies (Clark & Mangham, 2004b) to more extensive longitudinal investigations (Meisiek & Barry, 2007). However, despite this increasing interest to date there have not been any in-depth longitudinal controlled studies of the effects of such an intervention. The afore-mentioned self-efficacy investigation provided the opportunity to conduct such an assessment. Moreover, as argued below, the investigation into enhanced self-efficacy and its effects explored key issues of empowerment and control that lie at the heart of contemporary debates over the outcomes of OT interventions.

For its supporters, OT is viewed as having significant potential for creating an open and reflective 'aesthetic space' contributing to overcoming employee powerlessness (Beckwith, 2003; Beirne & Knight, 2007; Boje, 2007; Coopey, 1998; Ferris, 2002; Monks, Barker, & Mhanacháin, 2001). For its critics, however, it is seen as a manipulative form of 'corporate theatre' (Clark & Mangham, 2004a, b; Mangham, 2005) or 'theatre of the oppressor' (Nissley et al., 2004) embodying a restrictive agenda and set of control techniques that is used to channel employee energy and attention onto management's issues and problems.

Although not the initial intention of the self-efficacy investigation, the study of the OT intervention and its outcomes provides a test case for both claims. On the one hand, the study explored the effect of the OT intervention on narrower and broader dimensions of employee's sense of self-efficacy, esteem and control – key factors for both 'relational' and 'motivational' approaches to empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). On the other hand, the study also investigated OT's effects on narrower and broader forms of normative control (McLoughlin, Badham, & Palmer, 2005b) or soft constraint (Courpasson, 2006). The study explored not only the effect of the intervention on enhancing employee engagement, flexibility and customer orientation, but also the degree to which this was accompanied by emotional and stressful deep acting, concertive peer pressure or overall organization identification and commitment. The outcomes of the study support the view that it is possible to have both increased empowerment *and* control, and questioned the stronger suggestions made by both supporters and critics for the existence of major significant developments in either empowerment or soft control.

The paper proceeds in four main sections. The first section provides a theoretical introduction to empowerment, soft control and the effects of OT. The second section introduces the field study and the operational measures for empowerment and control. The

third section reports on the data and main findings. The fourth, concluding section discusses the findings and the further development of research on OT, empowerment and control.

## *Empowerment, Soft Control and OT*

### *1.1 Bringing About Cultural Change*

From paternalistic philanthropic industrial visionaries, through organization development (OD) movements, to more recent 'strong culture', 'soft' human resource management (HRM) and 'be yourself' programs encouraging employee authenticity and fun (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Fleming, 2009; Legge, 1995; Parker, 2000a, 2002), cultural change initiatives continue to reappear in successive waves of corporate reorganization (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Collinson, 1992; Kunda, 1992; Ramsay, 1977; Sturdy et al., 2003). In contrast to 'traditional' hierarchical, rule-governed, bureaucratic forms, the 'modern' 'best practice' organization is presented as one in which self-actualization, self-management and self-enterprise are encouraged and supported by community like forms of organization – shared values, facilitative leadership, employee empowerment and so on. In this view, cultural change is not just about changing culture; it is about creating organization through culture (understood in the more restricted sense as something that an organization *has*; (Smircich, 1983).

Rather than achieving control through the imposition of rules and regulations, fear of punishment, or as the means for attaining instrumental rewards, the new cultures seek 'alignment' by encouraging active identification with the organization, its goals, and codes of behavior (Du Gay, 2000; Etzioni, 1961). In short, as Kunda put it, cultural change, is about establishing regimes of 'normative control' that:

> "…attempt to elicit and direct the required efforts of members by controlling the

> underlying experiences, thoughts, and feelings that guide their actions. . . . In short, under normative control it is the employee's self – that ineffable source of subjective experience – that is claimed in the corporate interest (Kunda, 1992, p. 11)".

Such interventions are inherently contentious, raising as they do positive romantic images of self-expression and re-establishment of community (Peters & Waterman, 1982) as well as negative authoritarian images of intellectual and emotional incarceration in 'total' institutions (Casey, 1995; Ezzamel, Willmott, & Worthington, 2001).

### *1.2 OT as a Vehicle for Cultural Change*

In recent decades, OT has become an increasingly prominent vehicle for achieving such forms of cultural change. OT involves commissioned, tailor-made plays professionally staged for a defined audience, such as a certain department or a group of managers in an organization who are facing a critical problem that is dramatized in the performance (Schreyögg, 2001). Examples of problem situations might include cultural and political conflicts following a merger, opportunities and problems surrounding the implementation of strategic change, communication problems between middle and lower management, discrimination or bullying in the workplace and so on (Dabitz & Schreyögg, 1999). In recent years, uses of OT have spread rapidly (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Darsø, 2004; Larsen, 2005; Meisiek, 2002, 2004; Nissley et al., 2004; Schreyögg, 2001; Taylor, 2008; Teichmann, 2001; Westwood, 2004).

One of the most prominent strands within OT has been influenced by Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed' (Boal, 1979, 2000) using techniques such as forum theatre, rehearsal for reality and image theatre to stimulate reflection, dialogue and action on barriers to personal, organization and social development (Meisiek, 2004; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). In both its *aims* and its *methods*, the aspirations of such forms of OT

are strongly aligned with those of normative cultural change programs. The purpose is to create an aesthetic space that allows participants to surface and address conditions that have rendered them powerless to effectively handle the issues concerning them (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994). This aesthetic space stimulates discussion and action using theatrical methods involving actors, with audiences participating as *spect-actors* through acting, scripting and re-scripting dramatic representations of the issues and situations they confront at work. In Boal's terms, OT allows plasticity, dichotomy and tele-microscopy (Boal, 1995). Plasticity allows participants to explore all options in relation to an issue, surfacing aspirations, memories and thoughts, and liberating imagination. Dichotomy involves creating the freedom to intertwine fact and fiction that address real issues yet doing so in a way that allows creative and safe exploration. Tele-microscopy allows participants to zoom in and zoom out on specific issues, habits and behaviors, to observe themselves and others in action, and experience and reflect upon the consequences of alternative plans of action.

Discussion and debate over such forms of OT has focused on two main areas. Firstly, the extent to which the purpose and practices of actual OT interventions embody the aspirational aims of its founders and the stated aims of its practitioners, and secondly the degree to which these interventions have a significant effect and, in addition, the form that this effect takes.

### *1.3 Character of OT Interventions*

Numerous studies have revealed a high degree of variability in both the methods employed and aims of OT (Matula, 2009). Nissley et al (2004) noted there are significant differences in the degree to which the *methods* employed are those of participatory spect-actors involved in the acting and scripting of the performances as in many cases, the participants have little control over the script or the performance (Nissley et al., 2004). Similarly, Clark & Mangham observed that the *aims* of OT interventions and issues focused on vary greatly and

in many cases avoid the contentious structural, cultural and political issues facing the organization by focusing on 'second order' matters of task performance, communication, and interpersonal relationships (Clark & Mangham, 2004a, b). In contrast, advocates for 'Radical Theatre' (Coopey, 1998), Organizational Theatre' (Schreyögg, 2001) or 'Situational Theatre' (Meisiek, 2002) view interventions as stimulating political and social awareness that surface personal and organization un-discussables and create broad problem awareness and energy for change. Critics such as Clark and Mangham argue many events are more akin to manipulative 'Corporate Theatre', designed to limit thought and action and focus attention on managerially defined, tightly restricted problems and solutions (Clark & Mangham, 2004a, b).

### *1.4 The Effect of OT Interventions*

Despite considerable discussion and debate over the nature and purported effects of OT, rigorous evaluations of its impact are scarce. In nearly all cases, arguments are made on the basis of academic observation of specific OT performances (Beckwith, 2003; Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Ferris, 2002; Monks et al., 2001). Where broader ranging attempts have been made to explore types of OT interventions such as Meisiek (2002), Nissley et al (2004) or Clark and Mangham (2004), the reviews are based on observation and interviews and no quantitative evidence is provided of the impact of the different types of intervention. Even where there has been a systematic, mixed-methods attempt to assess the impact of OT using interviews, videos and surveys (e.g. Meisiek et al (2007)) it remains far from being an in-depth field study.

For example, survey questions used in the Meisiek et al (2007) study simply asked audience members about their general perceptions of the theatrical event and its immediate impact in terms of how much they talked about the event with others afterwards. This process allowed the researchers to gauge which issues resonated with employees as well as the level of issue

awareness raised by the OT intervention over time. While the results were of general interest from a communications perspective, the nature of the questions, non-use of valid and reliable psychological measures with pre and post intervention responses and lack of a control group for comparison purposes prevented the survey from shedding any light on OT's effect on important organization outcomes such as job satisfaction and absenteeism. Therefore, although management attributed higher job satisfaction and lower absenteeism to the OT intervention, this inference 'remains speculative' (Meisiek & Barry, 2007, p. 1821). As a result, generalizations are often presented about 'the' effects or potential of OT, with insufficient deliberation on the type of intervention being considered and a detailed evaluation of actual effects.

In this context, the purpose of this paper is to build on and contribute to the body of theoretical and empirical work on OT and its effects, through a description and analysis of an in-depth longitudinal field experiment where OT was used. The purpose of the paper is *not*, therefore, to draw general conclusions about *all* forms of OT. It is, rather, to explore the main claims being made about OT and its effects through a theoretically informed and rigorous evaluation of one specific field experiment. In accordance with the major lines of controversy identified above, the central focus is on the degree to which the field study provides evidence of increasing employee empowerment or the imposition of new forms of soft control.

### *1.5 OT and Empowerment*

In the rhetoric of its advocates, both academic and practitioner, OT's purpose is to enhance the understanding of disempowered members of organizations about their condition and provide them with the energy and confidence necessary to actively work to bring about transformational change. Whether, in Boal's terms, such initiatives address the barriers

imposed by ‘cops on the streets’ or ‘cops in the heads’ (Boal, 1995), the general view of OT is that of an actual or potential empowerment initiative (Monks et al., 2001). Given the diversity of theoretical and empirical perspectives present amongst analysts and practitioners of OT, it is not unsurprising that there is a degree of dispute over what ‘empowerment’ means. Despite the commitment of its supporters for a ‘radical theatre’ in organizations (Coopey, 1998), Boal himself, for example, appeared highly sceptical of the empowering potential of any form of OT. As he commented, in refusing to participate in an OT intervention organized by Dacapo Theatre in Denmark:

> “Please understand me. Theatre of the Oppressed is theatre of the oppressed, for the oppressed and by the oppressed. I know that social and labor conditions in Brazil and Denmark are very, very different, so it is difficult for me to imagine what words like managers, executives, Bang & Olufsen, business, etc., really mean to you. I know what they mean to me (Boal quoted in Larsen, 2005, p. 24).”

Such disagreements, in both their academic and political forms, are in part theoretical (what counts as genuine empowerment), and in part empirical (what are the actual or predicted effects of initiatives to create empowerment). As such, disagreements about OT and its effects reflect a literature on empowerment that is itself complex, diverse and variable in intention and quality. Our purpose here, however, is not to provide an authoritative overview of or statement upon this literature. It is, rather, more limited in focus, seeking to draw out established themes and operational measures that will allow us to explore some key empowerment effects of OT interventions.

A key focus that unites the interest and focus of our fieldwork study of self-efficacy with that of OT’s proponents is a common interest in the overcoming of *powerlessness* amongst

members of organizations who have previously been restricted in their confidence and ability to transform their conditions at work. For this reason, the following analysis of OT and empowerment draws strongly on Conger and Kanungo's (1988) definitive review of empowerment, with a focus on the degree to which OT provides "a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organization members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organization practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information" (Conger & Kanungo, 1988, p. 474).

In their review, Conger and Kanungo (1988) draw a sharp distinction between 'relational' and 'motivational' approaches to empowerment. Relational views are centrally concerned with the sharing and delegation of power, addressing levels of participation, the delegation and decentralization of decision-making, and the degree of authority sharing. In contrast, motivational views are primarily interested in 'empowering experience' (p.474), overcoming people's frustrations, feelings of powerlessness and inability to cope by enabling them to express their innate needs for power and self-determination. Conger and Kanungo are highly critical of relational approaches, arguing they ignore the degree to which participation and power sharing actually creates an empowering experience and fail to explore a variety of other factors that frustrate or enable an empowering experience. However despite such criticisms, their work can be seen as effectively combining relational and motivational theories. Their '5 stage' model of the empowerment process includes the removal of 'bureaucratic contexts' and 'authoritarian management' practices that create disempowering experiences, and identifies as key empowerment strategies the provision of autonomy from bureaucratic constraints and the fostering of opportunities for employees to participate in decision making.

As a motivational theory, empowerment is closely linked to Bandura's work on self-efficacy:

> "In terms of Bandura's model, empowerment refers to a process whereby an individual's belief in his or her self-efficacy is enhanced - to empower means either to strengthen this belief or to weaken one's belief in personal powerlessness. (Conger & Kanungo, 1988, p. 474)."

Consistent with expectancy theory, Bandura recognizes the significance of both personal efficacy and outcome expectations whereas Conger and Kanungo emphasize empowerment is about enhancing personal efficacy irrespective of achieved outcomes. It is this enhanced sense of personal efficacy that is seen as resulting in greater initiative towards, and persistence at, overcoming obstacles as well as the desire to improve task behavior and ultimately performance.

From the point of view of overcoming an individual's experiences of powerlessness, the major strength of the motivational model is that it directly addresses the importance of individual's feelings of self-efficacy as a significant motivational variable, as well as identifying a wide variety of factors that may be employed in enhancing such feelings. For our present concerns with OT interventions factors such as creating requisite technical, linguistic and social influence skills by providing information to employees about personal efficacy through: enactive attainment (success in job mastery); vicarious experience (observing others who perform successfully); verbal persuasion (verbal encouragement, feedback & praise); and appropriate emotional arousal (reduced stress, fear, anxiety, depression through supporting and trusting atmosphere) are of key significance (Bandura, 1997). Therefore to reduce individual feelings of powerlessness in the workplace (or enhance feelings of power), greater attention needs to be paid to the type of organization tasks or issues that the individual feels empowered to perform and address. In particular, it is

important to address how far experiences of empowerment in the narrower and more immediate features of work and social life have an effect on the confidence and ability of the disadvantaged to effectively influence the broader conditions and authority relations that affect their lives. The significance of addressing issues of collective powerlessness – at both a more immediate and broader level – is explicitly recognized by Bandura, reflected in his observation that:

> "The psychological barriers created by beliefs of collective powerlessness are especially pernicious because they are more demoralizing and debilitating than external impediments…..People who are convinced of their collective powerlessness will cease trying even though changes are attainable through perseverant collective effort. They see no point in trying to change their life circumstances (Bandura, 1997, p. 524)."

Further exploration of these issues is provided by 'relational' studies of empowerment. Drawing on the work of Paulo Freire (also a strong influence on Boal), Gaventa (1980) explores the 'psychological adaptations to the state of being without power' (p.16) hindering disadvantaged work groups from understanding and giving voice to their grievances and actively working to change their life circumstances. While noting the malicious, adaptive and fatalistic response to continual defeat, he points to the central significance a lack of both determining activity in their affairs and mastery over their immediate environment has on the psychology of the disadvantaged. As Freire (1971) argues, all 'closed societies' preventing self-determined action or reflection encourage a 'culture of silence', a lack of authentic voice and a susceptibility to the internalization of dominant values and views that 'there is no alternative' (Freire, 1971). Freire advocates a process of 'conscientization' – a focus on working with disadvantaged people to recognize and address 'limit situations' in their

immediate concrete environment. This process involves gradually expanding from one restricted 'limit situation' to a broader one, accompanied by reflection upon this process (Freire, 2000; Freire & Ramos, 1972).

In her classic study of participation in organizations, Patemen (1974) provides a rough framework for addressing a virtual 'ladder' of empowerment as participation moves from (a) the 'lower level' tasks of 'control of day to day shop floor activity' to 'higher level' tasks involving 'decisions relating to the running of the whole enterprise, decisions on investment, marketing, and so forth.' (Pateman, 1974, p. 70); and (b) evolves from *pseudo-participation*, where participation is a technique for managers to persuade employees to accept decisions that have already been taken; through *partial participation* involving the ability of all parties (employees as well as management) to influence decisions but the final say resting in the hands of only one party (management); to *full participation*, in which each individual member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome. In line with motivational theories, Pateman observed that *feelings* of participation, even if based on pseudo or partial participation, can have an effect on confidence, job-satisfaction etc., with some evidence of its association with higher generalized levels of political efficacy (Pateman, 1974). However, as Bandura also notes in regard to political efficacy, the power to achieve political change depends not only on people's beliefs in their ability to make a change but also the amenability of social systems to change by individual and collective influence. A belief in self-efficacy in, for example, narrow task performance may be accompanied by not only an inability to change broader conditions affecting their work but also a more or less conscious perception of powerlessness in this area. A rhetoric of empowerment, participation and involvement in 'lower level' workplace decisions may, in intention or effect, mask a lack of efficacy and power in affecting 'higher level' decisions that have long term impact on feelings and realities of personal efficacy in day-to-day work life.

Drawing on the themes explored above, motivational and relational approaches to empowerment can be used to further explore the nature and impact of OT interventions. In particular, is OT an intervention conforming to Conger and Kanungo's '5 stage' process of empowerment? Does it involve or address pseudo, partial or full participation at the 'lower' and 'higher' levels of management control? And, where there are indications of empowerment and increasing self-efficacy at the 'lower levels' of the form identified by Conger and Kanungo, is there any evidence of increased self-efficacy in relation to influencing 'higher levels' of control, involving perceptions of greater authority and control over working conditions or more generalized feelings of self-efficacy? These are the issues that the case study intervention will explore.

### *1.6 OT and Soft Control*

The kind of cultural change outlined above introduces new forms of 'soft' control moving from 'outer' to 'inner' control of employee behavior by getting into and winning over their 'hearts and minds' and is a contemporary form of 'high intensity' management (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Collinson, 1992; Etzioni, 1961; Kunda, 1992; McLoughlin, Badham, & Palmer, 2005a; Ramsay, 1977; Sturdy et al., 2003). The move from 'outer' to 'inner' control parallels that developed by Boal in his use of the metaphors 'cops in the street' and 'cops in the head' (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994) that is purported to involve less 'hard' control through personal control, fear of punishment, imposition of bureaucratic rules and regulations, technical pacing or instrumental rewards. Instead, strategies are introduced to achieve 'soft constraint' (Courpasson, 2006) by 'aligning' employee and organization interests and encouraging identification with the organization, its goals and codes of behavior (Du Gay, 2000; Edwards, 1981; Ezzamel et al., 2001; Thompson & Warhurst, 1998).

In line with this move to new forms of soft control, OT is seen by its critics as less a move towards empowerment and more a new form of intimate surveillance - surfacing, analyzing, and influencing the personal mindsets, emotions, culture and detailed behaviors of corporate employees (Booton, 2006; Clark & Mangham, 2004a, b). In this view, OT is a more or less successful exercise in cultural re-engineering, a contemporary version of 'human relations' initiatives that act as 'servants of power' in mobilizing the 'hearts and minds' of the workforce for corporate purposes (Baritz, 1974; Bell, 2000; Brief, 2000). The ethos is clear and established, as Brief (2000) illustrates in his citation of a 1957 New Yorker cartoon, which shows a friendly executive saying to a white-collar subordinate:

> "Now, I don't want you to do it my way because I say 'Do it my way'……I want you to do it my way because you see it my way (Mulligan, 1957, p39, cited by Brief, 2000, p. 344)."

In addition, the style and flavor of OT, with its emphasis on personal development, authenticity and fun, accords strongly with what critics have observed to be the contemporary spread of commercialized initiatives to 'be yourself' in the service of corporate objectives (Fleming, 2009) and participate in and espouse an ethos of immediacy, playfulness, subjectivity and performativity (Haugaard & Bauman, 2008; Hjorth & Kostera, 2007). While ostensibly in the interests of the self-realization of all employees, such initiatives are often only applied to lower not higher levels of management, place unspoken and undiscussed restrictions on the areas in which employees are allowed and encouraged to 'be themselves' and effectively operate as parts of the complex new systems of 'soft control' to engineer the type of corporate culture and employee identification required to cope with the rapidly changing environment faced by late modern organizations (Fleming, 2009). In this sense, OT can be viewed in terms of its attempt, and success, as a carrier of managerial ideology,

purveying in a more or less insidious form managerial ideas about the 'branding' of 'model' employees, using peer pressure and surveillance to support both conformity and innovation, encouraging 'deep acting' by employees in handling their own emotions and the emotions of others for the good of the corporation, and promulgating an ethos of the corporation as a community and happy family to which the employee should give his or her dominant commitment and loyalty.

This is encouraged, for example, by the personal, emotive and fun-oriented character and rhetoric of many OT initiatives. It is embedded in the focus of such initiatives in working with individuals and groups to help them understand and personally apply new corporately desired forms of behavior. Such initiatives, particularly those involving techniques such as 'rehearsal for reality' and others outlined by Boal in *Rainbow of Desire* (Boal, 1995) are also highly personal interventions, working closely with actors and fellow workers to significantly change the way in which personal and group emotions are understood and handled. As an entertaining and flexible theatrical event, addressing the personal dimensions of employee's lives and work, the use of OT is also symbolic of the type of caring, fun and energetic environment that contemporary corporate culture change programs often seek to create. In terms of the creation of new identifiable forms of control, however, the analysts and critics of soft control have identified a number of different overlapping control dimensions. These can be characterized as: entrepreneurial disciplinary regimes, systems of concertive control, forms of personal control, and employee corporate branding.

Firstly, new entrepreneurial disciplinary regimes are created through rhetorical, performance and career surveillance pressures for *self-disciplining* employees into becoming more flexible, creative and innovative 'entrepreneurial' selves, supported by a range of new and more intimate forms of technical, scientific and bureaucratic disciplining techniques. The latter

seek to ensure conformity to institutionalized expectations through various forms of surveillance, from electronic surveillance, through batteries of psychological and human resource mechanisms for measuring, monitoring and appraising performance, to the creation of new forms of contractual, outcome-oriented 'market' style post-bureaucratic organization structures (Du Gay, 2000; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004; Rose, 1990; Sewell, 1998; Townley, 1994). Secondly, new forms of *'concertive control'* are created through an increased focus on *peer pressure* in new team based work environments as control is passed from management to worker and from bureaucratic rules and regulations to team created and imposed value consensus and the socially prescriptive rules that flow from this (Barker, 1993). Thirdly, new methods of *'personal control'*, encouraging employees' emotive 'deep acting' in the interests of the enterprise are achieved through more 'advanced engineering of emotional labor' (Hochschild, 1983, p. 187). Fourthly, in a general attempt to encourage the *corporate branding* of employees, cultural change programs where employees are exhorted and required to align their values, work and behavior with the organization brand are frequently add to the above three methods (Schultz, Hatch, & Larsen, 2000). This process creates an organic community (Bauman, 2000) a happy family (Casey, 1995; Gabriel, 1999; Hochschild, 1997; Kondo, 1990) and leads to employees accepting the exaggerated loyalty demands of what has been described as 'greedy institutions' (Buchanan & Badham, 2008; Coser, 1974). The field study explores whether and to what degree the personal and emotive interventions of OT act as harbingers of these various overlapping forms of soft control.

## *Field Study and Operationalization of Empowerment and Soft Control*

### *2.1 The Field Study*

In 2004, an independent retail division of a major financial services organization implemented a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system as part of a strategic push to strengthen customer relationships. To achieve this objective, branch employees were encouraged to use the CRM system to identify eligible customers for a free and solely informative financial 'profiling' appointment with a bank employee. The employee's main task was to proactively ask the customer during the course of a regular over the counter (OTC) transaction to attend a profiling appointment. Since its introduction, team meetings were regularly held to discuss the CRM initiative and there was a positive trend in the number of appointments made. The organization also introduced an incentive system which implied a 10% bonus if the pre-defined appointment target was made. However, the targeted number of appointments set for branches was not being met and the cultural reticence of employees was identified as a key issue. A lack of self-efficacy beliefs amongst branch employees to ask customers to attend a profiling appointment was also pinpointed as a factor.

To address this issue, the parent company sponsored a pilot OT intervention for 20 'mid-sized' branches at the subsidiary. The OT intervention was specifically designed to increase participants' self-efficacy beliefs to initiate proactive conversations with customers and ask them to attend a profiling appointment. On the one hand, this intervention was a management sponsored initiative drawing on the expertise of external consultants to assist in the transformation of branch culture. On the other hand, it was a collaborative financial institution/university field experiment in stimulating and evaluating the effects of increased employee self-efficacy. Figure 1 outlines the timeline for the intervention and field experiment.

**INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE**

The OT intervention was designed as an 'active-audience' exercise (Meisiek & Barry, 2007) and was based on the specialist learning company's interpretation and use of Augusto Boal's techniques of *Forum Theatre* and *Rehearsal for Reality*. In order to systematically explore the impact and effects of the intervention, the field experiment used geographic and demographic criteria to assign matched pairs of branches to either a 'Pilot' (intervention) or 'Control' (no intervention) group. Participants included employees from three job categories: Branch Managers (10), Supervisor (10), and Customer Service Officers (CSO) (40).

The first stage involved a workshop centered on the use of *Forum Theatre*. Participants were presented four pre-scripted scenes that narrated the story of a normal working day in the life of three branch employees. The play was set in a fictional branch and the content built on issues related to initiating proactive conversations and asking customers to attend a profiling appointment. Each scene addressed concerns related to the Company's strategic focus on building customer relationships and in particular any constraints felt by employees that were preventing them from initiating conversations that could lead to a profiling appointment. The actors first presented the scenes as one piece of play, with a narrator (consultant) linking the scenes. Afterwards the actors replayed each scene and invited the spect-actors (employees) to probe different aspects of the presented scene. As the scenes were re-played, participants had the opportunity to make suggestions on how the characters should perform differently. Participants were then divided into small groups and asked to identify and discuss key issues as well as define character motivation, behavior, perspective and intent. The outcomes were later presented and discussed by all participants.

Following the *Forum Theatre* intervention, time was allocated for structured reflection and the development of goal-oriented, personal action plans. To help participants in this process, an audience member was invited to come 'on stage' and share a personal issue. The audience

offered solutions to the issue and helped conquer the concerns described by the participant. The group was next split into three breakout areas where actor/facilitators led each group through a discussion and practice session on how to address the identified challenges. Finally, the full group re-convened and participants were asked to discuss in pairs how they would apply what they had learned.

One month after the first workshop, a second workshop was held starting with a new, short piece of *Forum Theatre* that depicted customer-profiling issues, which the audience was asked to comment on and discuss. However the main focus of the second workshop was built around an intensive role play process labeled 'Rehearse for Reality' that gave participants the opportunity practice at initiating customer conversations and attending a profiling appointment. In Rehearse for Reality participants typically enter a dyadic role play with an actor while other participants watch (Carter et al., 2010). For this part of the workshop, participants were divided into smaller groups where they had the opportunity to engage in customer-profiling scenarios with an actor/facilitator playing a customer and the participant playing her or his self. The customer profiling scenarios were proposed by the participants and involved a scenario they found challenging and wanted to practice.

Given the difficulties typically faced by participants adopting new behaviors on challenging tasks, Bandura (personal communication, August 2, 2007) recommended adding a third stage using 'Entertainment Education' (E-E) as a positive reinforcement mechanism until the new behaviors became habitual. Defined as the intentional placement of educational content in entertainment messages (i.e. television or radio serials), E-E has been widely used in social interventions (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). E-E has also been identified as a likely vehicle to integrate participatory communication approaches such as *Forum Theatre* for democratizing organizations (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). Based on this advice, the consultants created a three

part DVD series incorporating E-E principles that were played once only at the start of a regular team meeting over three consecutive weeks. The DVD's showed the three Forum Theatre characters exploring proactive customer conversation issues but in a different setting to that used in the workshops. The DVD included an instruction guide for Branch Managers and Supervisors to lead the team meetings when the DVD's were played as well as suggesting questions and issues for discussion.

Supporters of OT frequently stress the positive effects of such techniques in enhancing dialogue, reflection and confidence about handling key organization matters (Beckwith, 2003; Beirne & Knight, 2007; Ferris, 2002). In contrast, critics emphasize that many OT interventions are 'Boal-lite' in character, truncating Boal's participatory and involving techniques and restricting the issues covered and goals of the intervention to narrow managerial topics (Clark & Mangham, 2004b). The field study in this case can be regarded as both 'heavy' and 'light' in character, involving as it did extensive use of participatory Boalian techniques but with a restricted focus of inquiry. As such, it can be roughly characterized as 'heavy-lite'.

In order to measure its effects, both the pilot and control groups completed online surveys before and after the OT intervention. The first survey was conducted just prior to the OT intervention and the second three months after the OT intervention finished (total elapsed time of eight months). Altogether 56 employees completed both the pre (Time 1) and post (Time 2) surveys. The Time 1 survey contained two parts: Part A was part of a larger survey assessing a range of employee traits, perceptions and attitudes. Part B was primarily a smaller, repeated measures version of the Part A survey with additional self-efficacy items. In combination, Parts A and B provided the basis for exploring the levels and forms of motivational empowerment and soft control. There was no statistical difference between the

pilot and control group respondents with respect to their employment conditions (full or part time), job classification (Manager, Supervisor or CSO) or tenure.

One week prior to the post-intervention survey being posted online, a proposed merger was announced by the parent company with a larger financial services organization. The proposed merger created uncertainty for branch employees, as this was the third merger many had been through in the previous decade. Both online surveys and focus groups conducted by the parent company showed significant employee concern about and dissatisfaction with the proposed merger. Careful interpretation of the results was required as in some instances there had been a decrease in employee ratings from Time 1 to Time 2 whereas an increase had been predicted. However, what still emerged were statistically significant differences between the pilot and control groups, albeit not in the form expected at the outset. Not only was the effect of the OT intervention able to be interpreted satisfactorily in spite of the proposed merger but the announcement raised interesting issues about self-efficacy and employee resilience in the face of disruptive change.

### *2.2. Measures of Empowerment*

The study focused on levels of motivational empowerment to determine the effect of the OT intervention. As an initial indicator, the study measured the degree to which the OT intervention changed participant's task self-efficacy beliefs and improved performance. Task self-efficacy was measured using Bandura's 100-point grid system. Job performance was measured in terms of the number of appointments made and ratings of behavior by mystery shoppers and supervisors. In line with both motivational and relational views of empowerment, these results were taken as indicators of *low-level* achievement in the overcoming of powerlessness. It represented, at minimum, a degree of task enlargement, and

the confidence and ability of employees to overcome their fears and reluctance to carry out these tasks. While the focus remains at a low-level of empowerment, the ability to provide front-line employees with this sense of self-efficacy is often a significant challenge, and is commonly regarded as one of the basic conditions of workplace empowerment.

Whether or not this *low-level* of empowerment was accompanied by *higher-levels* of empowerment was examined by exploring the degree to which it led to or was associated with more generalized self-confidence and increased belief in ability to influence outcomes beyond the narrower tasks within the job. The OT intervention provided an opportunity for employees to face the lack of determining activity and mastery they had over their immediate 'concrete' environment (Gaventa, 1980) that in turn prevented them from undertaking self-determined action or reflection on the dominant views of the 'closed society' they worked within (Freire, 1972). To the extent that the OT intervention enhanced employees' self-confidence and ability to participate effectively in work and society more generally, the outcome could be seen as one providing the motivational foundations for higher levels of empowerment and political efficacy (Pateman, 1974). In the field study this change was operationalized by exploring the degree to which branch employees increased their 'core self-evaluations' (CSE) or, more simply, 'positive self-concept' (Judge & Bono, 2001), by focusing on three of the four CSE scales (*general self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control)*. The CSE construct is a broad dispositional trait proposed as a potential explanatory variable for job satisfaction, work motivation and job performance (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998). It was used in this study as an indicator of motivational empowerment beyond the narrow job task that potentially extended into higher levels of self-efficacy at work and in society.

General self-efficacy (GSE) refers to an individual's perception of their ability to perform across a variety of different situations and was measured using Chen's (2001) 8-item scale.

Self-esteem has been defined as ‘a trait referring to an individuals’ degree of liking or disliking for themselves’ (Brockner, 1988, p. 11) and was measured using the 4-item version of the widely used 10-item Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1979). Locus of control refers to the degree to which persons expect that a reinforcement/outcome of their behavior is contingent on their own behavior/personal characteristics versus the degree to which persons expect that the reinforcement/outcome of their behavior is a function of chance, luck or fate, is under the control of powerful others, or is simply unpredictable (Rotter, 1990). Locus of control was measured using a 6-item Locus of Control scale that has shown satisfactory predictive validity (Lumpkin, 1985).

Finally, as the intervention did not lead to the organization implementing any new job enrichment or participatory programs, no measures were taken of higher relational forms of structural empowerment.

### *2.3 Measures of Soft Control*

In order to determine the extent to which the intervention increased soft control, the study focused on levels of *entrepreneurial disciplinary regimes*, *personal control and emotional labor*, *concertive control* and *employee corporate branding*. The host organization had already implemented a range of bureaucratic and electronic forms of performance surveillance and monitoring including: tracking performance against targets on the new CRM system, supervisor appraisals and mystery shopper feedback. These conditions were common to both the pilot and control groups.

The effects of the OT intervention in enhancing *low levels* of additional soft control were measured by exploring the degree to which these ‘external’ disciplinary controls were accompanied by a comparative increase in levels of performance achieved (described above)

and job absorption. Absorption refers to being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and was measured using three of the nine items on the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) that form the *absorption* sub-scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006). From the point of view of entrepreneurial disciplinary regimes, absorption indicates the successful creation of a proactive, enthusiastic and enterprising internal 'mental cage' (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004) accompanying an 'iron cage' of external surveillance. In combination with performance improvement, an increase in absorption would indicate greater low-levels of soft control. This change is regarded as low-level in two senses. First, absorption can also be taken as a sign of enhanced self-efficacy, and can justifiably be taken as an additional indicator of low-level empowerment (Bandura, 1986; Ozer & Bandura, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995). Second, while indicating a form of 'positive' disciplining (Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006; Du Gay, 2000), at this level it is separable from, and not necessarily linked with the higher-levels of soft control condemned by critics of emotional labor, concertive control and employee branding.

The first measure of *higher levels* of soft control is through indicators of personal control and the 'advanced engineering of emotional labor' (Hochschild, 2003, p. 187). Research has shown there are numerous negative consequences from emotional labor including psychological health problems such as stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion (Grandey, 2003; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009; Hochschild, 2003). Personal control and emotional labor were measured in three ways: deep acting, perspective taking, and exhaustion. In deep acting, employees attempt to modify their felt emotions so that a genuine, organizationally desired emotional display can follow whereas in surface acting employees modify their displays without modifying their feelings (Grandey, 2003; Groth et al., 2009). The 3-item *deep acting* scale and 4-item *surface acting* scales used by Grandey (2003) and

Groth et al (2009) were used to measure this form of personal control and emotional labor. In perspective taking, employees are required to imagine themselves as the customer and think about how they would feel (a form of emotional labor) in the customers' situation (Axtell, Parker, Holman, & Totterdell, 2007). It was measured using the 4-item p*erspective taking* scale developed by Axtell et al (2007). The final measure of personal control and emotional labor was exhaustion. To capture this form of emotional labor, the degree to which the intervention either reduced or enhanced vigor was assessed. Vigor is defined by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and be persistent even in the face of difficulties (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and has been characterized as the positive anti-thesis of exhaustion (Maslach, 2001). Vigor was measured using three of the nine items on the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) that form the *vigor* sub-scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

The second measure of higher levels of soft control is that of concertive control. As control passes from management to worker and from bureaucratic rules and regulations to value consensus, new socially prescriptive rules may be inscribed and adopted by work teams, resulting in intrusive degrees of peer pressure to perform upon individual employees. Although a direct measure of concertive control has been developed (Wright & Barker, 2000), this measure was inappropriate for the field study, as the host organization had not formally adopted a team-based organization structure. Instead, the study employed an indirect measure using a *flexible role orientation* (FRO) scale originally developed by Parker et al (1997). Parker et al's (2006) FRO scale includes four items reflecting the degree of experienced responsibility for colleagues and six items reflecting the degree of felt responsibility for customers. The extent that employees felt greater responsibility for their colleague's behavior after the OT intervention was taken as a general indication that increased concertive control had been introduced.

The third measure of higher levels of soft control is employee corporate branding. It is employed here as a general form designed to capture the degree to which organizations are successful in establishing commitment to the organization's interests and values, resulting in increased dedication and enthusiasm in contributing to the organization's purpose. Two measures were used to capture this phenomenon, perceived organizational support (POS) and dedication. POS is linked to greater affective commitment to the organization and is the degree to which employees perceive the organization supports them by caring about their well-being and satisfaction (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). The field study used the four highest loading items from the *perceived organizational support* scale (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and provides a direct measure of the level of pride and commitment employees feel towards the organization they work for. It was measured using three of the nine items on the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) representing the *dedication* sub-scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

### *Results*

The field experiment involved an 'active-audience' performance with a 'Boal lite' agenda, characterized above as a 'heavy-lite' OT intervention. The results indicate significant yet relatively lightweight outcomes from the OT intervention. They revealed a significant low level increase in both empowerment and soft control and a lack of evidence for any high level increase in either area. Whether or not this is praised as a Goldilocks effect – obtaining a clear result by being 'not too heavy, not too light' – or condemned or dismissed for its lack of substantive heavyweight political impact – will be addressed in the conclusion. Table 1 displays the Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for all measures for the combined pilot and control group respondents. Table 2 shows independent sample t-tests (list wise) for a range of measures captured at Times 1 and 2.

**Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here**

### *3.1 Effects on Empowerment*

*Low Level Empowerment*

Overall low-level empowerment was found to increase significantly for the pilot group compared to the control group. In terms of task self-efficacy, there was a relative increase in the pilot group's belief to 'ask customers for appointment', 'ask customer for their business', 'make recommendations', and 'point out improvements' and a relative decrease in their belief to 'smile and make eye contact' and 'provide a warm and friendly greeting'. In coming to this conclusion, both general linear modeling (GLM) and independent sample t-tests (T-tests) were used to assess the impact of the OT intervention on the task self-efficacy items. GLM showed that two items ('ask customer for appointment' and 'smile and make eye contact') had highly significant (p=0.01) main (Time) and significant (p=0.05) interaction (Group) effects from Time 1 to Time 2. Although the mean for the 'ask customer for appointment' item decreased significantly for both groups from Time 1 to Time 2, the drop in the mean (86.3 to 68.0) for the control group was much sharper (p=0.000) than the decrease in the mean (78.6 to 72.2) for the pilot group (p=0.062). In contrast, there was a highly significant decrease (p=0.008) in the mean (99.1 to 95.3) for the pilot group for the 'smile and make eye contact' item whereas the decrease in the mean (99.3 to 98.7) for the control group from Time 1 to Time 2 was not significant.

In addition to these main and interaction effects, there were weaker but still statistically significant changes for four items ('ask customer for their business'; 'make recommendations'; 'point out improvements'; 'provide warm and friendly greeting') for the

pilot group compared to the control group. For all four items GLM showed a significant main (Time) effect (ranging from p=0.002 to 0.093) but an insignificant interaction (Group) effect. However, T-tests showed that for the first three of these four items, there was only a small decrease in the mean for the pilot group from Time 1 to Time 2 whereas the mean for the control group dropped sharply. The relative change in this decrease meant that the significant difference in the means between the groups at Time 1 disappeared at Time 2. In contrast, T-tests showed there was no difference in the means at Time 1 for the fourth item (provide warm and friendly greeting) but a significant difference emerged at Time 2.

Overall the pilot group's self-efficacy beliefs to carry out more challenging customer interaction tasks such as 'ask customer for appointment' or 'ask customer for business' showed a relative improvement compared to the control group as a result of the OT intervention. Curiously however, the pilot group's self-efficacy beliefs to undertake more superficial customer interaction tasks such as 'smile and make eye contact' and 'provide warm and friendly greeting' showed a relative decline compared to the control group as a result of the OT intervention. This result may indicate a certain degree of discomfort at undertaking these types of new activities, despite an increased confidence in their ability to carry them out. Alternatively, it may suggest employees increased confidence at undertaking challenging tasks meant they felt less need to comply with bureaucratic regulations.

**Insert Figures 2a and 2b about here**

In terms of behavioral and performance outcomes, the OT intervention had a positive impact on the number of appointments made by the pilot group while the observations of mystery shoppers, supervisors and other anecdotal evidence was suggestive of a significant shift in customer service behavior. The following data underlies these conclusions. In regard to *job*

*performance*, Table 1 shows the overall mean for the number of Appointments Made rose from 21.7 to 30.2 between Time 1 and Time 2 while Table 2 shows the mean for the pilot group increased from 22.7 to 36.0 and the mean for the control group increased from 20.8 to 24.9. A mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance was conducted to assess the impact of the OT intervention. Figure 3 shows there was a highly significant main (Time) effect (Wilks Lambda = .81, $F$ (1, 79) =19.18, p <.0005) as well as a significant interaction (Group) effect (Wilks Lambda = .94, $F$ (1, 79) =5.28, p=0.024). T-tests showed there was no significant difference between the pilot and control group at Time 1 (p=.729) but that the difference between the groups was close to weakly significant at Time 2 (p=.129). Overall, the combination of the significant interaction effect and weak significant T-test at Time 2 suggests there was a positive impact on low level empowerment as measured objectively by the number of appointments made.

**Insert Figure 3 about here**

With regards to *mystery shopping*, Table 3 shows that the mean for the pilot group increased from 44.7% prior to the OT intervention to 60.5% after the intervention finished. In contrast, the control group's mean (51.5%) was identical before and after the OT intervention. Similarly, the frequency with which researchers were offered the opportunity to make a profiling appointment increased for the pilot group from 0 out of 10 visits prior to the OT intervention to 4 out of 10 visits afterwards whereas the frequency for the control group stayed the same (1 out of 10 visits). Although the number of observations suggests caution needs to be used in interpreting the mystery shopping results, overall they provide indicative and objective support for the OT intervention's impact on low level empowerment. With respect to s*upervisor ratings*, Table 4 shows the number of responses is too low to be conclusive. Nevertheless, the modal response of 'fair improvement' was consistent with other

anecdotal feedback received informally from the host organization. Overall this subjective measure suggests the OT intervention had a positive impact on low level empowerment.

*Higher Level Empowerment*

In regard to higher level empowerment, the positive change in task self-efficacy and the corresponding behavioral and performance improvements were not accompanied by any indication of significant increases in motivational empowerment. Neither GLM nor T-Tests showed any difference between the pilot and control group before or after the OT intervention in regard to: generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem or locus of control. A failure to achieve higher levels of motivational empowerment is strongly indicated by the lack of any growth in their perceived capability to meet task demands in a variety of situations, no improvement in how they generally felt about themselves, and no increase in degree to which they viewed their behavioral outcomes to be due to their own behavior and character.

## 3.2 Effects on Soft Control

*Lower Level Soft Control*

Overall, lower level soft control was found to have increased in comparison with the pilot group as a result of the OT intervention, while no evidence was found for the existence of higher levels of soft control. The conclusions about the lower level of soft control were based on the observed increases in performance and task related behaviors detailed above, combined with evidence that the reduction in absorption brought about by the uncertainty surrounding the proposed merger was significantly less for the pilot group than it was for the control group. GLM tests showed there were highly significant main (Time) and interaction (Group) effects for absorption ($p=0.010$) from Time 1 to Time 2 (See Figure 4). Although the proposed corporate merger reduced the sense of personal accomplishment and increased the

sense of inefficacy experienced by both the pilot and control groups, the OT intervention buffered the decrease for the pilot group compared to the control group. In effect, the pilot group had stronger self-efficacy beliefs after the OT intervention after taking into account the overall decrease due to the proposed merger.

**Insert Figure 4 about here**

*Higher Level Soft Control*

In regard to higher level soft control, the results of the field experiment indicated that there was a reduction rather than an increase in personal control and emotional labor and no evidence of an increase in either concertive control or internalized employee corporate branding for the pilot group compared to the control group. With respect to the reduction in personal control, the evidence suggests the pilot group experienced lower levels of emotional labor in the form of deep acting, less feeling they needed to adopt the customer's perspective and a slightly lower level of emotional exhaustion.

GLM and T-tests were used to assess the relative impact of the OT intervention on the level of deep acting on the pilot group. GLM showed close to weakly significant (p=0.135) main (Time) and interaction (Group) effects from Time 1 to Time 2 while T-tests showed no difference between the pilot and control groups at Time 1 or Time 2. However there was a weakly significant (p=0.066) decrease from 2.86 to 2.40 for the pilot group's mean whereas the mean for the control group (2.73) remained the same. By contrast, there was no change in the level of surface acting reported by either the pilot or control groups from Time 1 to Time 2. In regard to perspective taking, T-tests showed there was a significant difference (p=0.046)

between the mean for the pilot (3.83) and control (4.30) groups at Time 2 (the only time this variable was measured). As perspective taking was highly correlated (p=0.002) with deep acting and uncorrelated with surface acting (p=0.629), the significantly lower mean reported by the pilot group at Time 2 compared to the control group suggests that employees felt less need to adopt the customer's perspective as a result of the OT intervention. In relation to emotional exhaustion, GLM and T-tests were used to assess the relative impact of the OT intervention on the level of vigor reported by the pilot group. GLM showed a highly significant (p=0.000) main (Time) and a close to weakly significant (p=0.119) interaction (Group) effect for vigor from Time 1 to Time 2. Although T-tests showed no difference between the pilot and control group at either Time 1 or Time 2, the drop in the mean (4.76 to 3.85) for the control group was sharper (p=0.000) than the decrease in the mean (4.46 to 4.01) for the pilot group (p=0.040), suggesting a slightly reduced level of emotional exhaustion felt by the pilot group compared to the control group.

The conclusion in relation to peer pressure and concertive control was based on there being no significant increase in branch employees felt responsibility for their colleagues, while at the same time they felt less responsible for customers. In reaching this conclusion, GLM and T-tests were used to assess the relative impact of the OT intervention on flexible role orientation (FRO) for the pilot group. The FRO colleague sub-scale showed a close to weakly significant (p=0.12) main (Time) effect and a totally non-significant (p=0.99) interaction (Group) effect from Time 1 to Time 2. In addition, T-tests showed there was a significant difference (p=0.045) between the pilot and control group that did not change from Time 1 to Time 2. Therefore, the pilot group reported no change in the level of felt responsibility for colleagues as a result of the OT intervention. By contrast, the FRO customer sub-scale showed an insignificant (p=0.41) main (Time) effect but a significant (p=0.022) interaction (Group) effect from Time 1 to Time 2 as the mean for the pilot group fell from 4.57 to 4.32 whereas

the mean for the control group increased from 4.69 to 4.81. Further, T-tests showed no significant difference at Time 1 between the pilot and control group but there was a highly significant (p=0.002) difference at Time 2.

The conclusion in regard to internalized employee corporate branding was based on the lack of evidence for increased dedication accompanied by a lack of any increase in perceived organization support from the company by the pilot group compared to the control group. GLM and T-tests were used to assess the relative impact of the OT intervention on the level of dedication reported by the pilot group. Although there was a highly significant (p=0.000) main (Time) effect, T-tests and GLM there was no significant difference between the groups. In relation to perceived organization support, although the pilot group had a higher mean (4.91) than the control group (4.69) at Time 1 and at Time 2 (4.85 vs. 4.47 respectively) both T-tests and GLM showed there was no significant difference between the groups. Therefore, normative control did not change as a result of the OT intervention as there was no change in the relative level of perceived organization support reported by the two groups.

### *Conclusion*

The aim of this paper was to explore the power effects of organizational theatre through an in-depth longitudinal field experiment. The specific focus was on the contributions that the OT intervention made to employee empowerment and the introduction of new forms of soft control. The field study results confirmed recent arguments that it is possible for organizational initiatives to simultaneously increase autonomy *and* control (Courpasson, 2006; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Following the OT intervention, the pilot group's self-efficacy beliefs and task performance in regard to initiating customer interactions was significantly higher than the control group and they were relatively more attuned to the needs

of customers and making more appointments. While both the pilot and control groups were subject to similar increases in performance monitoring and evaluation, the pilot group out-performed the control group on the key customer service dimensions. In this way, the outcome of the OT intervention was a 'lightweight' increase in empowerment *and* soft control. The outcomes also illustrate and support recent arguments that 'soft' constraints and 'mental' controls both overlap (Courpasson, 2006) and are interlinked with structural controls (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004).

What the outcomes of the field experiment also showed were that these relatively 'lightweight' increases in empowerment and soft control were not accompanied by more 'heavyweight' increases in either area. Empowerment remained restricted to task self-efficacy in enlarged frontline service jobs, a development that did not lead to more generalized feelings of self-efficacy, self-esteem or personal control; nor did it lead to any higher levels of job enrichment or employee participation in decision-making. Soft control remained at the level of increased attention to customer desires and higher levels of performance in meeting targets for customer appointments. This was not, however, accompanied by any indications of exacting and stressful emotional labor, concertive control by peers or greater identification with or commitment to the company. The organizational intervention was, in this sense, more lightweight in outcomes than supporters of radical theatre have hoped and critics of corporate theatre have feared.

The purpose of this paper was *not* to make general pronouncements about OT's *effects* on the basis of what is, ultimately, only one case study. The OT intervention was inevitably specific in form, but can be usefully described as 'heavy-lite' in character. Unlike more superficial forms of OT, the intervention was 'active-audience' in nature (Meisiek and Barry, 2007), involving a substantial degree of 'heavy' participation and control by the employees in both

the scripting and acting out of performances. Given the successful task-focused outcomes of the intervention, an interesting question is the degree to which this level of involvement and participation in the theatre performances was a significant factor in obtaining these results. At the same time, however, the intervention was relatively 'lite' in the range and depth of its purpose. It was tightly focused on task-requirements and performance, with no broader discussion of the nature and value of the cultural change that the bank was going through or the structural conditions and authority of bank employees. It is not surprising, therefore, that the intervention was not associated with the broader empowerment outcomes advocated by proponents and supporters of more participatory organizational environments. In summary, the intervention was far from being what Clark and Mangham (2004) called 'Boal-lite' in its methods, but could be quite justifiably so-described in its aims and purposes. Its lightweight effects on empowerment and the introduction of soft control may have been strongly affected by this character. Further research in this field would be well-advised to produce more systematic typologies of OT interventions, as well as more rigorous longitudinal evaluations of the effects of different types of OT interventions.

In addition, however, serious consideration has to be given to the fluid nature of the conditions and effects of power structures and relations. As we have seen in this field study, traditional either/or schemas of autonomy or control, or iron or mental forms of control, fail to capture the situated and interrelated nature of power relationships (Clegg et al., 2006). Moreover, it is far from easy to capture the fluid dynamics of power through structural characterizations of the formal nature of interventions or questionnaire evaluations of outcomes as power is an elusive concept and a slippery phenomenon (Clegg et al., 2006). Moreover, its exercise and effects are notoriously difficult to capture in the fluid conditions of liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000). This is particularly the case in the complex 'cultures of ambiguity' and 'carnivals of control' characteristic of organizational change interventions

(Badham & Garrety, 2003; McLoughlin et al., 2005a).

With specific reference to OT and its effects, Nissley et al. (2004) critically commented on their own 'control of role/control of script 'schema' observing that

> "Control is in itself a complex issue, and we might question whether having control of the role and script really gives control of the performance to the worker" (Nissley et al., 2004, p. 828)."

In his longitudinal study of Dacapo Theatre's play *I Endure with a Smile*, Meisiek and Barry (2007) also note the complex nature of power dynamics in the "shifting landscape of issues and interpretations" that characterize any such intervention (Meisiek & Barry, 2007, p. 1821). In their case study, multiple 'shifting reflections' occurred both as the series of OT performances progressed and in post-performance conversational interpretations of these performances in 'polyphonic' organization contexts. Similar to Kornberger, Clegg and Carter (2006), Meisiek and Barry (2007) concluded that the existence of multiple frames and voices, and the complexity and fluidity of late modern organizations give OT the unique ability to go beyond the planned intentions of management and to shake up perspectives and help make the unseen and un-discussable a matter of dialogue and debate. At the same time, however, the now well-recognized gap between the empowering rhetoric and the practice of managerial change initiatives (Buchanan & Badham, 2008; McLoughlin et al., 2005a) is sufficient to warrant a note of caution against any too open, fluid and extensive interpretation of OT interventions and their effects.

This observed fluidity also makes it difficult to make *any* rigorous analysis of the play of power and its effects. As Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006, p. 221) observed, relatively

static analyses of elements, levels or dimensions of power fail to capture the complexity and fluidity of the play of power itself. If further research on OT is to hope to capture this play, more systematic conceptualizations of OT interventions and more rigorous evaluations of power effects need to be accompanied by more sophisticated 'mixed method' studies of their multiple stages, levels, contexts and both intended and unintended effects. What this paper has hopefully provided is one rigorous and systematic, yet inevitably partial, contribution to more informed and sophisticated studies of the political effects of OT – studies that may help address Schreyögg and Häpfl's (2004, p. 699) concern that "the field of theatre *in* organizations is still in its infancy."

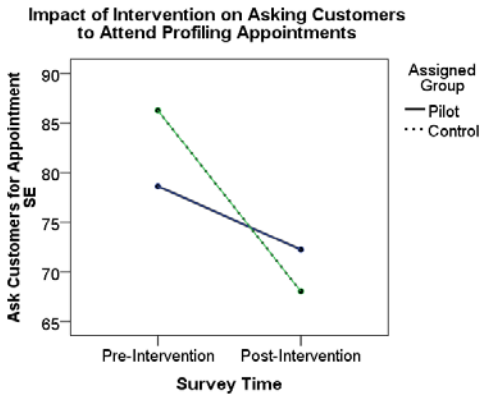
## Figure 1

## Intervention and Performance Measurement Timeline

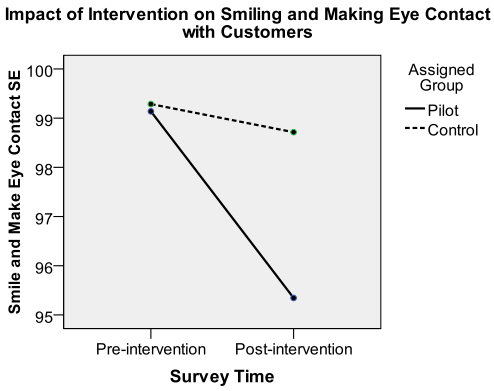
| Group: | Pilot & Control | Pilot Only | Pilot Only | Pilot & Control | Pilot & Control |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Q4 07 (End) | Q1 08 (Beg) | Q2 08 (Late) | Q3 08 (Late) | Q4 08 (End) |
| Activity: | Pre-Intervention Survey (T1) | Workshops 1 & 2 (Half Day) | DVD's Introduced | Post-Intervention Survey (T2) | Final Data Collection |
| Mystery Shopping | (Pre-workshop 1) | (Post-workshop 2) | (Pre-DVD's) | (Post-DVD's) | |

Corporate Merger Announcement

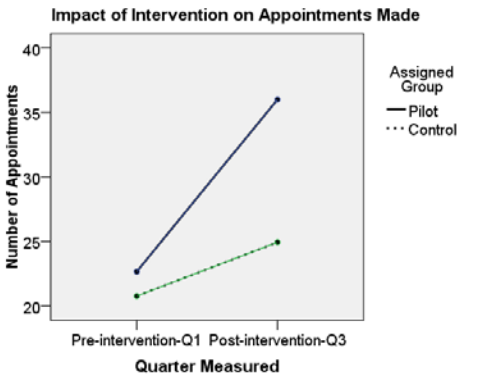
## Figure 2a




## Figure 2b




## Figure 3




## Figure 4

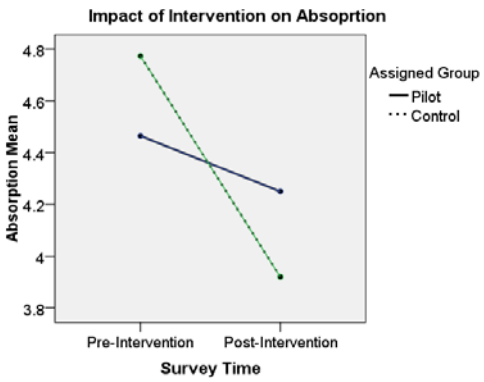


**TABLE 1**

**Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Self Efficacy and Performance[a]**

| | Variable | Mean T1 | S.D. T1 | Mean T2 | S.D. T2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | App't Single SE | 83.7 | 18.9 | 70.9 | 19.7 | - | .377* | .529** | .479** | .479** | .514** | .046 | -.291* | .258X | .316* | .076 | .362** | .428** | .305* | .456** |
| 2. | Appointments Made | 21.7 | 24.3 | 30.1 | 32.7 | .049 | - | .434** | .334* | .455** | .423** | -.043 | -.329* | .198 | .349* | .335* | .217 | .447** | .072 | .261 |
| 3. | Engagement | 4.8 | 0.93 | 4.1 | 0.89 | .482** | .069 | - | .926** | .907** | .948** | .123 | -.220X | .326* | .240X | .248X | .500** | 504** | .398** | .491** |
| 4. | Absorption | 4.6 | 1.04 | 4.1 | 0.98 | .416** | .019 | .850** | - | .736** | .829** | .127 | -.128 | .251X | .243X | .200 | .478** | .462** | .311* | .474** |
| 5. | Vigor | 4.6 | 1.15 | 3.9 | 0.90 | .449** | .116 | .901** | .616** | - | .926** | .907** | .948** | .123 | -.220X | .326* | .240X | .248X | .500** | 504** |
| 6. | Dedication | 5.0 | 0.97 | 4.3 | 0.99 | .393** | .048 | .898** | .650** | .745** | - | .736** | .829** | .127 | -.128 | .251X | .243X | .200 | .478** | .462** |
| 7. | Deep Acting | 2.6 | 1.29 | 2.6 | 1.28 | .038 | .215 | .105 | .150 | .058 | .035 | - | .341** | .411** | -.013 | .024 | -.151 | .065 | .144 | .153 |
| 8. | Surface Acting | 1.7 | 1.00 | 1.7 | 1.05 | -.148 | -.134 | -.211* | -.102 | -.188 | -.250* | .345** | - | -.069 | -.051 | -.062 | -.235X | -160 | -.214 | -.161 |
| 9. | Perspective Taking | - | - | 4.1 | 0.84 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | .144 | .211 | .092 | .184 | .378** | .196 |
| 10. | FRO Colleague | 4.0 | 0.97 | 4.2 | 1.01 | .337** | .106 | .297** | .302** | .235* | .217* | .025 | .053 | - | - | .613** | .123 | .208 | .293* | .320* |
| 11. | FRO Customer | 4.6 | 0.47 | 4.6 | 0.58 | .327** | .077 | .508** | .407** | .442** | .483** | .028 | -.097 | - | .569** | - | .338** | .286* | .323* | .255X |
| 12. | Perc'd Org. Support | 4.9 | 1.15 | 4.7 | 1.10 | .268** | -.184 | .513** | .379** | .421** | .579** | .039 | -.258* | - | .222* | .384** | - | .292* | .303* | .388* |
| 13. | Generalized SE | 5.8 | 0.73 | 5.8 | 0.68 | .269** | .038 | .534** | .385** | .480** | .542** | -.041 | -.137 | - | .248* | .428** | -.502** | - | .558** | .512** |
| 14. | Self-Esteem | 5.6 | 1.00 | 5.8 | 1.02 | 228* | -.105 | .289* | .192X | .226* | .331** | -.101 | -.171 | - | .021 | .119 | -.447** | .618** | - | .492** |
| 15. | Locus of Control | 5.0 | 0.75 | 4.9 | 0.77 | .176X | .026 | .301* | .210** | .274** | .306** | -.114 | -.112 | - | .188 | .192X | -.304** | .362** | .364** | - |

[a] Values below the diagonal result from the Time 1 survey; those above the diagonal result from the Time 2 survey.

** Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). X Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).

**TABLE 2**

***Selection of Independent Samples T-Tests***

| **Variable** | Pilot Mean T1 | Control MeanT1 | Sig (2-tailed) | Pilot Mean T2 | Control Mean T2 | Sig (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Warm and Friendly Greeting Self-Efficacy | 99.14 | 99.46 | .612 | 97.07 | 99.11 | .074[x] |
| Point Out Improvements Self-Efficacy | 89.66 | 94.79 | .073[x] | 88.28 | 90.54 | .487 |
| Make Recommendations Self-Efficacy | 88.97 | 95.00 | .045[*] | 87.93 | 89.29 | .667 |
| Ask for Business Self-Efficacy | 88.79 | 95.36 | .019[*] | 85.52 | 86.96 | .715 |
| Appointments Made | 22.66 | 20.77 | .729 | 36.00 | 24.93 | .129 |
| Deep Acting | 2.86 | 2.73 | .713 | 2.40 | 2.73 | .367 |
| Surface Acting | 1.54 | 1.97 | .129 | 1.48 | 2.04 | .053[*] |
| Flexible Role Orientation Colleague | 3.63 | 4.20 | .045[*] | 3.86 | 4.43 | .043[*] |
| Flexible Role Orientation Customer | 4.57 | 4.69 | .324 | 4.32 | 4.81 | .008[**] |
| Perceived Organizational Support | 4.91 | 4.69 | .494 | 4.85 | 4.47 | .189 |
| Job Stress | 2.74 | 3.16 | .317 | 2.83 | 3.53 | .098[x] |
| Satisfaction with Life | 4.95 | 5.20 | .442 | 5.16 | 5.04 | .684 |

[**]Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). [*] Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). [X] Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).

**TABLE 3**

***Mean Mystery Shopping Results for Pilot, Control and Major Groups***

| Branch Group | Pre Intervention | Post Workshops | Pre DVD | Post DVD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pilot** | 44.7 | 52.6 | 49.7 | 60.5 |
| **Control** | 51.5 | 37.1 | 47.9 | 51.5 |
| **Major** | 55.2 | 51.9 | 49.1 | 54.6 |
| **Mean** | 50.6 | 47.4 | 48.9 | 55.5 |

**TABLE 4**

***Perceived Change in Participant Skill and Confidence as Rated by Branch Managers***

| Behavior | | Got Worse/ No Change | Slight Improvement | Fair Improvement | Major Improvement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Start Meaningful Conversations | Number | | | 3 | |
| | Quality | | | 2 | 1 |
| Generate Leads | Number | | | 2 | 1 |
| | Quality | | | 1 | 2 |
| Conduct Customer Interviews | Number | | | 3 | |
| | Quality | | 1 | | 2 |
| Ask for Customers Business | Number | | 1 | 2 | |
| | Quality | | 1 | 2 | |
| TOTAL | | | 3 | 15 | 6 |

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# Conclusion

## Synopsis

This thesis began as an exploration of what motivates people to work, a topic of significant academic and managerial interest. The field of work motivation has historically been particularly relevant to industrial and organisational psychologists. An overview is provided by Locke's (1997) integrative model of the complex nature and multiple influences upon people's motivation to work. Three of the psychological theories presented in Locke's model emphasise social influences on work motivation (Adams, 1963; Bandura, 1986; Greenberg, 1990) while other theories focus on the needs of the individual (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Herzberg, 1968), specific psychological processes (Locke & Latham, 1984) and personality (McClelland, 1987). Despite this acknowledgement of social influences, and the development of new integrative perspectives, (Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004; Kehr, 2004; Seo, Barrett, & Bartunek, 2004), work motivation theory is still heavily biased towards organisational psychology ((Latham & Pinder, 2005; Locke & Latham, 2004; Steers et al., 2004). Although the need for work motivation theorists to look beyond psychology to fields such as organisation theory and strategic management has been acknowledged (Locke & Latham, 2004), other disciplines such as economics (Steel & König, 2006) and sociology (Leonard et al., 1999) also offer insights. Therefore, my initial focus was to review diverse literatures (including psychology) in order to find an under-explored research topic within this broad area that could make a contribution to work motivation theory and practice.

As I read through the wider literature, I became particularly interested in the concept of self-efficacy. Although self-efficacy is a well-recognised psychological construct within Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory and as such had already been incorporated within Locke's (1997) model of work motivation, a number of factors suggested self-efficacy warranted further scrutiny as an underutilised concept. First, self-efficacy is recognised as a

construct of interest in the field of sociology, mainly in relation to agency, personal control and perceived competence (Gecas, 1989). Second, the self-efficacy mechanism is based on social cognitive theory's principal of triadic reciprocal causation (personal factors, environmental influences and behaviour) and therefore explicitly takes into account external factors that are prominent in work settings. Third, conducting research into the influence of self-efficacy on work motivation lent itself to undertaking a field experiment to test the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance. Finally, the concept of self-efficacy with its focus on confidence in one's competence, personal agency and control and effectiveness resonated deeply with my own experience as an employee and as a manager. Although social cognitive theory and self-efficacy occupied a prominent place in work motivation within academia, the apparent lack of utilisation of self-efficacy within organisations was puzzling. Therefore, undertaking a self-efficacy based study had the potential to make a contribution to both the theory and practice of work motivation.

Self-efficacy research on work motivation was a major area of academic inquiry in the late 1980's and 1990's and led to a meta-analysis conducted by Stajkovic and Luthans (1998). This study found a weighted average correlation between self-efficacy and work-related performance of .38, representing a 28% gain in performance which is much greater than the 10% performance increase found for goal setting (Wood & Locke, 1987) or the 14% increase reported for feedback and coaching (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). However, a key word search of relevant constructs using one primarily academic (questia.com) and two practitioner oriented (HBR.org and Money.cnn.com) websites found that self-efficacy was much less prominent in management oriented publication channels compared to goal setting, feedback & coaching and employee engagement. One plausible explanation for the slow dissemination of self-efficacy's influence on work-related performance through management oriented publication channels and in turn into management practice is that research in this area has been almost exclusively conducted with student participants doing simulated work tasks in

non-work related settings (Saks, 1995a). A detailed examination of past research found only five studies where employees were assessed on actual work-related tasks but in each case there were limitations due to conceptual issues or measurement grounds. While these five studies provided supporting evidence for a positive relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance, they were based on designs that did not directly measure the relationship between self-efficacy on work-related performance by employees in an organisational setting using objective job performance measures. Given the absence of self-efficacy studies undertaken in the real world of work, there was a major gap in the literature that was arguably contributing to self-efficacy's lack of adoption in management practice.

The identified shortcomings with previous self-efficacy research coupled with its sociological connection provided the impetus and overall direction for my dissertation. Firstly, I wanted to find out whether or not a self-efficacy based intervention undertaken with employees performing relevant work tasks in a workplace setting would have a similar impact on work-related performance that it had been found to have with student participants performing work-related tasks in laboratory settings. Second, I wanted to investigate the emerging concept of employee engagement (often referred to as 'discretionary effort') which in contrast to self-efficacy was being written about widely in management oriented publications as well as being measured extensively in management practice, yet appeared compatible and have a number of synergies with employee engagement. Thirdly, as a former manager, the notion that human behaviour could be explained by social psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and agency appealed to my intuition as a meaningful avenue of intellectual pursuit that potentially had significant practical applications. Therefore, I believed strongly that studying social cognitive theory with a particular emphasis on self-efficacy and employee engagement was the right focus for my dissertation.

## Methodology

In order to undertake a controlled field experiment on self-efficacy's influence on work motivation and behaviour that met the criteria for a PhD dissertation, I needed to first find an appropriate self-efficacy based intervention. Fortunately, the experience of working with Division W had introduced me to the potential of Forum Theatre specifically as well as organisation theatre (OT) generally as self-efficacy based interventions. Forum Theatre in particular appeared to have been a catalyst for participants' sense of personal agency and control while also concurrently providing them with all four sources of self-efficacy information to measure their own self-efficacy beliefs against. Therefore, building an intervention with Forum Theatre and other OT techniques seemed to provide an ideal self-efficacy based intervention to use in a field experiment.

Second, I successfully recruited two host organisations (Bank M and Bank S). With respect to Bank M, I successfully conducted two sets of workshops and measured the impact of the OT intervention on participant self-efficacy as well as performance. The report contained in Appendix V suggests that the intervention achieved its primary objective of increasing participant self-efficacy on the targeted tasks. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggested that participant self-efficacy and performance was positively influenced by the OT intervention. Unfortunately, due to the low number of participants at the second set of workshops in particular, it was only possible to draw inferences from the survey data and anecdotal evidence. As a case study, the intervention with Bank M highlights the challenges of conducting rigorous field experiments.

With respect to Bank S, its parent company (Bank G) provided financial support to the project as well as an introduction to the senior management at Bank S. After a number of discussions, we were able to devise a workshop program with negligible operational impact

that would address an identified, specific task where the perceived lack of branch employee self-efficacy appeared to be having an adverse impact on performance. Ten matched pairs of mid-sized branches were randomly assigned to either a pilot group that completed surveys and participated in the OT intervention or a control group who only completed surveys. Both groups completed online surveys one week prior to the first workshop and two months after the third and final stage of the intervention was conducted. Workshop participants included branch managers, senior and regular customer service officers. The first half day workshop was built around Forum Theatre while the second half day workshop conducted one month after the first workshop was built around a form of intensive role play called 'Rehearse for Reality'. Four months after the second workshop, a three part DVD series featuring the main characters from the Forum Theatre script that was played at a series of weekly team meetings as a behavioural support and reinforcement tool. Two months after the DVD series was shown and one week before the post-intervention survey was posted online, a proposed corporate merger was announced by the host organisation. As discussed in the Methodology chapter, as well as in the papers, this announcement created a degree of uncertainty for branch employees that, in an interesting manner, influenced the results, but also contributed to lower survey response rates for the post-intervention survey.

## Discussion

The three papers at the core of this thesis investigated the influence of self-efficacy on work motivation within organisational settings. The first paper confirmed that task-specific self-efficacy is significantly correlated with objectively measured, work-related performance. Regression analysis showed task-specific self-efficacy and the related construct of employee engagement were both important predictors of work-related performance even after controlling for past performance. The second paper described an OT intervention that lifted task-specific self-efficacy and buffered the influence of a proposed corporate merger on employee engagement for a pilot group of employees compared to a control group. Given the

increasing importance of human capital in creating sustainable competitive advantage in organisations, this paper highlighted how self-efficacy based interventions can be used by HR professionals to improve employee engagement and performance within organisations. The third paper explored the effect of an OT intervention on both narrower and broader dimensions of employee's sense of self-efficacy, self-esteem and personal control that are key factors in 'motivational' and, albeit to a lesser degree, 'relational' approaches to empowerment. It also investigated the concerns of many of OT's critics by exploring its effect in bringing about narrower and broader forms of 'soft' control, such as personal control through emotional labour, increased peer pressure and employee branding. The findings support claims for the benefits of OT in enhancing task-based self-efficacy and task performance, while finding little evidence of either higher level empowerment or significant insidious forms of soft control. In this manner, the three papers draw on a novel field experiment on self-efficacy and work performance that, in itself, provides a contribution to the field of work motivation as the only longitudinal field study to have been conducted in this area. The papers address the implications of the findings of this field study for three separate academic areas of inquiry: self-efficacy and work performance; employee engagement; and organisational theatre and empowerment.

***Paper 1***

The first paper had two key foci. First, I set out to determine whether the positive relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance extended from the laboratory to workplace settings. Second, I investigated the relationship between the work motivation related concept of employee engagement with task-specific self-efficacy and performance at the individual level of analysis. With respect to investigating the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance, the mean correlation between the two task-specific self-efficacy variables (Make appointments SE and Ask for business SE) and their matching performance measures (Appointments made and Products sold) was r = .43 which is higher

than the r = .38 correlation reported in the meta-analysis by Stajkovic et al (1998). Regression analysis also found that both task-specific self-efficacy variables were highly significant ($p \leq 0.01$) predictors of performance after taking into account past performance. In contrast, although general self-efficacy was highly significantly correlated with performance, it only explained additional variance one of the two performance measures at a significant ($p \leq 0.05$) level after controlling for past performance. Therefore, task-specific self-efficacy was confirmed as a better predictor of performance than general self-efficacy. Overall, the results showed the relationship between task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance was potentially even stronger in organisational settings where employee performance was measured on work-related tasks than in the laboratory.

With respect to employee engagement, the first paper showed this variable was highly significantly correlated with both task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance. In addition, regression analysis found employee engagement was a significant ($p \leq 0.05$) predictor of Appointments made and a highly significant ($p \leq 0.01$) predictor of Products sold even after controlling for past performance. The introduction of task-specific self-efficacy at the third step explained significant ($p \leq 0.05$) additional variation in performance whereas the addition of general self-efficacy did not. In total, past performance, employee engagement and task-specific self-efficacy explained over 50% of the variance in performance. The first paper also examined the extent to which employee engagement's dimensions provided insight into the role of affect in predicting work-related performance. Our study clearly showed that vigour and dedication helped to explain additional variation above and beyond that of task-self-efficacy whereas absorption only partially explained incremental performance. The fact we were able to show the influence of employee engagement and the two dimensions with the highest affective component after first controlling for past performance clearly reinforces the importance of employee engagement as a predictor of work-related performance. These findings support the positive relationship between employee engagement, task-specific self-

efficacy and work-related performance and suggest employee engagement is an important variable determinant of organisational performance.

There are three main limitations to the reporting of the findings in the first paper that relate to: (1) inadequate controlling for the influence of distal variables; (2) insufficient accounting for the impact of the OT intervention on performance for the pilot group compared to the control group; and (3) analytical technique employed. With respect to the first issue, it was simply not feasible to conduct a test of general mental ability (the distal variable with the highest regression estimate) for participants. Discussions with the host organisation suggest that participants were a fairly homogenous group due to the recruitment and selection processes of the host organisation, stability of the workforce, nature of the job and the conditions associated with branch level employment in the retail banking industry. Therefore it is unlikely that general mental ability acted as a significant moderator of the task-specific self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship.

As far as personality differences were concerned, the abbreviated (11 item) version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) 44 item provided a preliminary estimate of the possible influence of personality generally and in particular conscientiousness (the only personality variable to have shown a significant regression estimate in Judge et al's (2007) study). Notwithstanding the fact that Cronbach's alpha of .62 for conscientiousness in this study was slightly below the normal cut off of .70, the correlations between conscientiousness, task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance were generally negative and very weak. In addition, the mean (6.2/7.0) and standard deviation (0.8) for conscientiousness had a strong negative skew and indicated that in the main employees considered themselves to be very conscientious. The relatively high scores and narrow distribution for conscientiousness coupled with the very weak correlations between conscientiousness, task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance suggest that controlling for conscientiousness will not change the demonstrated relationship between task-specific self-efficacy and work-related

performance. Consequently, it is doubtful that conscientiousness would have moderated the relationship even if the full BFI 44 item scale had been used.

Finally with respect to experience, both the repetitious nature of branch employee's interactions with customers and their length of employment strongly imply that participants were very familiar with and had a great deal of practice at performing their roles. Therefore it is unlikely that experience is a significant moderator in the task-specific self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship. In total, these arguments suggest that the inclusion of more comprehensive measures of the three key distal variables would not have had a material influence on the overall findings.

As far as the possibility that the OT intervention interfered with the results of the task-specific self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship, it was certainly feasible that the relative boost to self-efficacy reported by pilot group participants distorted the findings of the task-specific self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship. However a close examination of the results for the pilot and control groups does not support this argument. Although papers 2 and 3 clearly show that the intervention had a statistically significant influence on the pilot group's perceptions of their task-specific self-efficacy and employee engagement, the difference between the pilot and control groups was relatively small. To the extent that there was evidence of statistical non-significance, the main issue is one of small numbers as Table 5 illustrates.

## Table 5

***Correlations between task specific self-efficacy, performance & employee engagement***

| Group | N | Variable | Appointments Made | Sig. | Employee Engagement | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Combined | 38 | Make Appointments SE | .417** | .009 | .324* | .047 |
| Pilot | 18 | Make Appointments SE | .478* | .045 | .388 | .112 |
| Control | 20 | Make Appointments SE | .359 | .120 | .280 | .232 |
| Combined | 38 | Employee Engagement | .423** | .008 | - | - |
| Pilot | 18 | Employee Engagement | .391 | .109 | - | |
| Control | 20 | Employee Engagement | .461* | .041 | - | |
| **Group** | **N** | **Variable** | **Products Sold** | **Sig.** | **Employee Engagement** | **Sig.** |
| Combined | 38 | Ask for Business SE | .468** | .003 | .289[X] | .078 |
| Pilot | 18 | Ask for Business SE | .351 | .153 | .389 | .110 |
| Control | 20 | Ask for Business SE | .595** | .006 | .240 | .308 |
| Combined | 38 | Employee Engagement | .522** | .001 | - | - |
| Pilot | 18 | Employee Engagement | .638** | .004 | - | |
| Control | 20 | Employee Engagement | .431[X] | .058 | - | |

Conventionally an R value ≥ .3 is considered to be the minimum necessary for a correlation to be deemed significant. The four correlations between task-specific self-efficacy and performance show R values ranging from .351 to .595 which would normally be considered to be significant. However the actual significance of the R value for Make Appointments SE for the control group (.391) for Ask for business SE for the pilot group (.351) with performance were both marginally outside the minimum acceptable level of p = 0.10 (p =. 120 and .153 respectively) even though the mean R value of .371 was almost identical to the mean value of .38 reported in Stajkovic et al's (1998) met-analysis. Similarly, the correlations between employee engagement and performance showed R values ranging from .391 to .638 which would normally be considered to be significant. However, the significance of the R value (.391) between Appointments made with engagement for the pilot group (p = .109) was marginally outside the minimum acceptable level of p = 0.10 while the significance of the R value (.431) for Products sold with engagement for the control group (p = .058) was only weakly significant. When the two groups were combined, the R values for self-efficacy with performance increased to .417 for Make appointments SE and .468 for Ask for Business SE

and both relationships became highly significant ($p \leq 0.01$). Similarly, the R values for self-efficacy with engagement increased to .423 for Make appointments SE and .522 for Ask for business SE when the two groups were combined and both correlations became highly significant ($p \leq 0.01$). The above changes strongly suggest that a clear and statistically significant relationship existed between task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance irrespective of the intervention's influence.

The correlations between task-specific self-efficacy and employee engagement essentially showed a similar pattern to those highlighted in the previous paragraph. The R values for Make appointments SE and Ask for business SE for the pilot group were both over .39 which was $\geq 0.3$ level normally considered to be significant. However, the significance for both relationships ($p = .112$ and .110 respectively) was marginally outside the minimum acceptable level of $p = 0.10$. For the control group the lack of significance was more pronounced for Make appointments SE and Ask for business SE ($p = .232$ and .308 respectively) and the R value was below .3 (.280 and .240 respectively). However, when the two groups were combined the R value for Make appointments SE and employee engagement increased to .324 and was significant ($p = .047$) while the R value for Ask for business SE and employee engagement increased to .289 and was weakly significant ($p = .078$). Therefore, the lower R values and significance levels for the control group compared to the pilot group suggest the intervention appeared to have had a small and positive impact on the strength of the relationship between employee engagement and task-specific self-efficacy. Nevertheless, the low number of respondents in each group was an even bigger factor in determining the significance of the relationship between task-specific self-efficacy and engagement. Therefore the intervention had a marginal and significant influence on task-specific self-efficacy, employee engagement and performance.

Finally, with respect to using hierarchical regression and mediation analysis as the primary methodological techniques in preference to other methodologies such as structural

equation modelling, the original intention was to use the experimental design method for all analyses and publications where t-tests and generalised linear modelling would demonstrate changes between the groups. However, as the first paper was primarily concerned with assessing the relationship between the self-efficacy, employee engagement and work-related performance in work settings, using hierarchical regression and mediation analysis provided a parsimonious way to test these relationships. These techniques enabled past performance to be included as a more stringent test of the self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship while also assessing the mediating influence of employee engagement on the task-specific self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship. The preceding paragraphs clearly show the dominant underlying influences of task-specific self-efficacy and employee engagement on work-related performance whereas the intervention only had a marginal and significant impact. Notwithstanding the efficacy of employing these techniques, structural equation modelling would have provided an alternative means of analysing these relationships. Therefore a third limitation to this paper is arguably the choice of regression and mediation analysis in preference to structural equation modelling.

In summary, the first paper supports Stajkovic et al.'s (1998) meta-analysis by showing there was a strong and significant relationship between task-specific self-efficacy and work-related performance in workplace settings using work-related tasks and employed adults when measured on a longitudinal basis. The paper also showed employee engagement was a related but distinct construct from self-efficacy that acted as both a partial mediator of the task-specific self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship and an independent predictor of work-related performance. The combination of past performance, task-specific self-efficacy and employee engagement helped to explain over 50% of the variation in future performance. Employee engagement fully mediated the general self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship. Therefore, future studies of work-related performance should include measures of employee engagement and self-efficacy but not general self-efficacy.

***Paper 2***

The second paper assessed the impact of an OT intervention designed to boost employee self-efficacy to undertake a challenging, interpersonal task on employee engagement and performance. Employee engagement is increasingly being adopted as a key HR performance measure by organisations but there is limited empirical research on employee engagement's impact on organisational performance at the individual level of analysis. In order to more closely examine the impact of the intervention on work-related performance, quarterly data from Quarter 5 (when the two workshops were held) and Quarter 7 (the quarter immediately after the DVD part of the intervention took place) were analysed along with survey data collected at the start of Quarter 5 (before the intervention) and midway through Quarter 7 (2 months after the DVD part finished). Therefore, the correlations, standardised βeta coefficients and Adj. $R^2$ values in this paper are slightly different than the first paper where Time 1 performance was the mean of Quarters 4 and 5 and Time 2 performance was the mean of Quarters 7 and 8. Correlation analysis showed that employee engagement was highly significantly correlated ($p = 0.01$) with both single performance level and composite measures of task-specific self-efficacy as well as with Appointments made and Products sold. This finding supported the study's first hypothesis: employee engagement was positively related to self-efficacy and work-related performance measured at the individual level of analysis. Regression analysis showed that employee engagement was a weakly significant predictor of performance with Adj. $R^2$ of .050 ($p = 0.058$) for Appointments made and Adj. $R^2$ of .053 ($p = 0.073$) for Products sold when it was added at the third step after past performance and the respective composite measure of self-efficacy. Overall, the combination of past performance, task-specific self-efficacy and employee engagement explained between 23.9% and 38.5% of the variability in performance.

As far as the impact of the intervention on self-efficacy was concerned, the announcement of the proposed corporate merger influenced the direction of the results for

some of the key attitudinal variables from Time 1 to Time 2. Nevertheless, a mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance for the intervention's focal task-specific self-efficacy variable (Ask customer for appointment SE) showed there was a significant ($p = 0.025$) interaction (group) effect with the mean for the pilot group decreasing at a significantly lower rate than for the control group. Given that none of the other self-efficacy measures showed a significant interaction (group) effect, the intervention clearly buffered the pilot group's belief in their self-efficacy to ask customers to attend branches for appointments compared to the control group. As far as the impact of the intervention on employee engagement was concerned, a mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance showed significant interaction effect ($p = 0.048$) for with the mean for the pilot group decreasing from 4.63 to 4.21 while the mean for the control group decreased from 4.90 to 4.01. Specifically the interaction effect was strongest ($p = 0.010$) for the absorption sub-scale (the reverse measure of inefficacy) whereas there was no interaction effect for the dedication sub-scale (the reverse measure of cynicism). These findings underscored the intervention's targeted impact on the pilot group's beliefs in their efficacy in spite of any concerns they may have had about the proposed corporate merger announcement.

With respect to the impact of the intervention on performance, a mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance showed there was a significant interaction ($p = 0.024$) for Appointments Made with the mean for the pilot group increasing from 22.7 to 36.0 while the mean for the control group increased from 20.8 to 24.9. Overall, the results demonstrated that an intervention designed to increase employee self-efficacy beliefs in a targeted area had a significant and positive impact on task-specific self-efficacy, employee engagement and performance. The long-term influence of the intervention was reinforced through select branch manager interviews undertaken 12 months after the intervention finished (See Table 6). Three pilot group branch managers were asked to rate the skills, confidence and performance on four key branch employee behaviours (both quality and number) since the

intervention finished compared to employee behaviour before the intervention. Although the number of responses was too low to be conclusive, the modal response of 'fair improvement' was consistent with other anecdotal feedback received informally from the host organisation.

## Table 6

***Perceived Change in Participant Skill and Confidence as Rated by Branch Managers***

| Behaviour | | Got Worse or No Change | Slight Improvement | Fair Improvement | Major Improvement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Start Meaningful Conversations | Number | | | 3 | |
| | Quality | | | 2 | 1 |
| Generate Leads | Number | | | 2 | 1 |
| | Quality | | | 1 | 2 |
| Conduct Customer Interviews | Number | | | 3 | |
| | Quality | | 1 | | 2 |
| Ask for Customers Business | Number | | 1 | 2 | |
| | Quality | | 1 | 2 | |
| TOTAL | | | 3 | 15 | 6 |
| N.B. Nil Responses as Got Worse or No Change | | | | | |

Therefore, based on the combined statistical analysis and subjective evidence available, it appears OT interventions offer considerable scope for HR practitioners as a vehicle to enhance employee self-efficacy, raise employee engagement scores, improve organisational performance and build HR capital stock.

For consistency purposes, it would have been preferable to use the same time periods for data analysis in this paper that was used in the first paper (e.g. T1 = Mean of Q4/Q5 and T2 = Mean of Q7/Q8 instead of T1 = Q5 and T2 = Q7). However, generalised linear modelling of the single performance level task-specific self-efficacy variable (Ask customer for Appointment SE) using T1 = Mean of Q4/Q5 and T2 = Mean of Q7/Q8 performance data was not significant whereas it was significant when Q5 and Q7 performance data was used. The reason for this difference in significance is that single-level measures of task-specific self-efficacy are not as robust a predictor of future performance as multiple-level composite measures are, particularly when controlling for past performance. Table 7 clearly shows that in the left hand column where single quarter performance data was used, there was no difference between single-level and multiple-level measures. In contrast, the right hand

column shows that where past performance had a higher standardised βeta co-efficient, multiple-level composite measures were superior at explaining incremental variance, a finding that is consistent with Bandura's recommendations for measuring self-efficacy beliefs (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). The weaker significance for single-level task-specific self-efficacy when performance was measured as the mean of two quarters explains why this variable was non-significant when generalised linear modelling was used. As multiple-level composite self-efficacy was only measured at Time 2, it was not possible to conduct generalised linear modelling with this variable. Therefore, the best alternative to show the difference in task-specific self-efficacy between the pilot and control groups because of the intervention was to reduce the importance of past performance in the regression equation by modifying the performance quarters being measured.

## Table 7

***Regression Analysis of Self-Efficacy on Appointments Made***
***Single vs. Multiple Level Task-Specific Self-Efficacy***

| *Step* | *Dependent Variable:* Appointments Made Q7 | *β* | *T* | *Sig.* | *Dependent Variable:* Appointments Made Q7/Q8 | *β* | *T* | *Sig.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Appointments Made Q5 | .481** | 3.40 | .002 | Appointments Made Q4/Q5 | .656** | 5.36 | .000 |
| 2 | Appointments Made Q5 | .484** | 3.72 | .001 | Appointments Made Q4/Q5 | .614** | 5.10 | .000 |
| | Ask Customer for Appointment SE | .378** | 2.91 | .006 | Ask Customer for Appointment SE | .228X | 1.89 | .066 |
| 1 | Adj. R Square - .213 | | | | Adj. R Square - .416 | | | |
| 2 | Adj. R Square - .342 | | | | Adj. R Square - .453 | | | |
| | Appointments Made Q7 | | | | Appointments Made Q7/Q8 | | | |
| 1 | Appointments Made Q5 | .482** | 3.40 | .002 | Appointments Made Q4/Q5 | .656** | 5.36 | .000 |
| 2 | Appointments Made Q5 | .454** | 3.51 | .001 | Appointments Made Q4/Q5 | .611** | 5.48 | .000 |
| | Make Appointments Hard SE | .392** | 3.03 | .004 | Make Appointments Hard SE | .345** | 3.10 | .004 |
| 1 | Adj. R Square - .213 | | | | Adj. R Square - .416 | | | |
| 2 | Adj. R Square - .352 | | | | Adj. R Square - .523 | | | |

**Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). X Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).

The pattern of single-performance level items having a less significant relationship with performance was confirmed by the weaker correlation between "Ask Customer for Appointment Single SE' item and 'Number of Appointments Made' at Time 2 ($r = .34$, $p = \leq 0.05$) compared to that between Make Appointments Hard and 'Number of Appointments Made' ($r = .43$, $p \leq 0.01$). Future studies of the impact of self-efficacy based interventions

such as OT should use multiple-level composite measures of task-specific self-efficacy rather than single-level measures to assess the interventions' impact.

Finally, there is a distinct possibility that the intervention's impact was simply evidence of the so called Hawthorne effect – that behaviour during the course of the experiment can be altered by the participants' knowledge that they were in an experiment (Jones, 1992). Although a review of 13 studies found no evidence that controls such as novelty, special attention or mere awareness of participation had any effect on behaviour, it did find evidence that reactivity to experimentation occurred when subjects identified a purpose for the experimental treatment and an expectation for their own behaviour in the research situation (Adair, 1984). Given that pilot group participants in this study were aware that the workshops were intended to support them with their ability to ask customers to attend the branch for a profiling appointment, it is possible that it was not the OT intervention but simply involvement in the experiment that led to participants modifying their behaviour. However, a detailed statistical analysis of the original Hawthorne studies found essentially no evidence of Hawthorne effects, either unconditionally or with allowance for direct effects of the experimental variables themselves (Jones, 1992). Further, even if a Hawthorne effect did exist, two factors mitigate against the likelihood that it caused participant behavioural change. First, it wasn't simply behaviour that changed as a result of the intervention. The changes in responses to the wide range of psychometric variables such as self-efficacy, employee engagement and customer orientation demonstrate a significant attitudinal change that implies more than simply a Hawthorne effect occurred. Second, the longitudinal nature of the study with 8 months between surveys and 15 months of data used to monitor performance suggest that if present, any Hawthorne effect would have well and truly worn off by the time the post-intervention survey and second set of performance data was collected. Therefore, it is much more likely that the OT intervention was responsible for behavioural change than the Hawthorne effect.

***Paper 3***

The third paper examined the use of OT as a planned change intervention to raise employee participation and 'empowerment' and create new forms of 'soft' control. First, *low-level empowerment* was examined in terms of changes to task self-efficacy and job performance. With respect to *task self-efficacy*, general linear modelling (GLM) showed two items (ask customer for appointment and smile and make eye contact) had highly significant ($p = 0.01$) main (Time) and significant ($p = 0.05$) interaction (Group) effects from Time 1 to Time 2 while T-tests showed a relative and statistically significant change in the means for four other items. These findings are consistent with that reported in Paper 2. Overall the pilot group's task self-efficacy beliefs to carry out more challenging customer interaction tasks showed a relative improvement compared to the control group as a result of the OT intervention while their task self-efficacy beliefs to undertake more superficial customer interactions showed a relative decline.

In regard to *job performance*, a mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance showed there were highly significant main ($p = 0.01$) (Time) effect as well as significant ($p = 0.05$) interaction (Group) effects with the pilot group's performance increasing relative to the control group. This finding is consistent with Paper 2. With respect to *mystery shopping*, the mean for the pilot group increased by over 33% over the course of the OT intervention while the mean for the control group was static. Similarly, the frequency that researchers were offered the opportunity to make a profiling appointment increased 300% for the pilot group whereas the frequency for the control group stayed the same. Finally, with respect to s*upervisor ratings*, the modal response of 'fair improvement' for the pilot group was consistent with other anecdotal feedback received informally from the host organisation. Overall, job performance improved and when combined with the evidence self-efficacy increased for challenging tasks, low level empowerment increased as a result of the

organisational theatre intervention. Secondly, there was no change in *higher level empowerment* as there was no difference between the pilot and control group before or after the organisational theatre intervention in regard to generalised self-efficacy, self-esteem or locus of control. Therefore, organisational theatre does not appear to provide the broader and higher levels of empowerment necessary for participants to change their life circumstances and challenge the conventional power relationships at work.

Thirdly, Paper 3 showed there was a change in *lower level soft control* as a result of the organisational theatre intervention. The conclusions about the lower level of soft control were based on the observed increases in performance and task related behaviours detailed above as well as the significantly lower decrease in absorption reported by the pilot group compared to the control group. Consistent with Paper 2, GLM tests showed there were highly significant main (Time) and interaction (Group) effects for absorption (p=0.010) from Time 1 to Time 2. Although the proposed corporate merger reduced the sense of personal accomplishment and increased the sense of inefficacy experienced by both the pilot and control groups, the OT intervention buffered the decrease for the pilot group compared to the control group.

Finally, Paper 3 investigated whether there was evidence of *higher level soft control* as a result of the OT intervention by examining changes to the level of personal control, concertive control and normative control experienced by employees. With respect to personal control, three scales (deep acting, perspective taking and vigour) were evaluated. GLM showed close to weakly significant (p=0.135) main (Time) and interaction (Group) effects from Time 1 to Time 2 directly attributable to the significant (p=0.066) decrease in the pilot group's mean from 2.86 to 2.40. In regard to perspective taking, the significant difference (p = 0.046) between the mean for the pilot (3.83) and control (4.30) groups at Time 2 suggests the pilot group felt less need to adopt the customer's perspective compared to the control group.

Finally, in relation to emotional exhaustion, GLM showed a close to weakly significant (p=0.119) interaction (Group) effect for vigour from Time 1 to Time 2. Overall, there appears to lower rather than higher levels of personal control being reported by participants following the OT intervention.

With respect to concertive control, there was no change in the level of felt responsibility for colleagues as a result of the OT intervention and therefore no evidence that the level of concertive control increased as a result of the OT intervention. Similarly, as far as normative control was concerned, GLM and T-tests showed there was no change in either the level of dedication or perceived organisational support reported by the pilot group compared to the control group. Therefore normative control did not change as a result of the organisational theatre intervention. Overall, the evidence suggests there was a decrease in higher levels of soft control rather than an increase as hypothesised by critics of organisational theatre.

Overall, the field study results confirmed recent arguments that it is possible for organizational initiatives to simultaneously increase autonomy *and* control (Courpasson, 2006; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989), and that OT interventions are able to open up opportunities for empowerment while not inevitably imposing extensive and insidious forms of management control (Meisiek, 2002; Schreyögg, 2001). While, empowerment remained restricted to task self-efficacy in enlarged frontline service jobs, a development that did not lead to more generalised feelings of self-efficacy, self-esteem or personal control; nor did it lead to higher levels of job enrichment or employee participation in decision-making, soft control remained at the level of increased attention to customer desires and higher levels of performance in meeting targets for customer appointments. This was not accompanied by any indications of exacting and stressful emotional labour, concertive control by peers or greater identification with or commitment to the company. The finding that personal control

decreased while simultaneously customer related performance increased was unexpected as previous studies have suggest increased soft control over employees by greater expenditure of emotional labour through deep acting (Groth et al., 2009) and perspective taking (Axtell et al., 2007) is desirable for organisational objectives to be met. The OT intervention was, in this sense, more lightweight in outcomes than supporters of radical theatre have hoped and critics of corporate theatre have feared.

Given the dearth of systematic, empirical studies on the impact of OT as an organisational change mechanism, this study makes a significant contribution from both a theoretical and empirical perspective. However, the emergent nature of this study means there are a number of limitations to the findings. Firstly, there is considerable scope to both broaden and sharpen the measures used to capture changes in hard and soft control within an organisational environment. For example, collecting specific measures of empowerment, peer surveillance and emotional labour would have provided direct rather than indirect employee perceptions in these areas. In addition, several variables (non-controlling supervision and work control) were only measured prior to the intervention due to space limitations on the post-intervention survey while multiple performance level measures of task-specific self-efficacy as well as perspective taking were only introduced on the post-intervention survey. Ideally, these variables would have been collected both before and after the OT intervention. In-depth qualitative interviews and observational research could also have been used to gather more information about the influence of the OT intervention on participants. Finally, having a more targeted method to match customer experience responses directly against employees would have provided a better measure of model employees.

Besides the quality of the measures used before and after the intervention, the number of participants in both the pilot and control group hampered analysis. For example, deep acting and vigour provided indicative rather than conclusive evidence that the OT intervention had changed employee perceptions. A larger number of respondents would also have enabled

comparisons of the relative influence of the four forms of soft control. Another interesting issue that requires a larger number of respondents and methodological adjustment is whether it was one, two or all three of the OT interventions (Forum Theatre, Rehearse for Reality and Entertainment Education) that were used influenced employee perceptions of hard and soft control and performance.

In summary, the OT intervention had a clear influence on participants as an organisational change initiative. The combination of using Forum Theatre, Rehearse for Reality and Entertainment Education had a cathartic effect on participants that both motivated action and generated creativity in the form of employees being empowered to explore new ways of engaging in conversations with customers. In effect, these OT interventions addressed the 'cops in the head' metaphor Boal used to describe the form of oppression he experienced in Europe compared to the 'cops in the street' metaphor he used when he originally created Theatre of the Oppressed. Critics of OT interventions have suggested Forum Theatre in particular is a form of 'Boal-lite' when adapted for use inside organisations. This criticism appears justified given the limited and specialised effects that this specific form of OT intervention used in this study had on participants. Conversely however, there was not a corresponding increase in soft control as OT's critics argued would occur. Creating a more empowered and liberated workforce is ironic as Boal himself stated that if he had to do things all over again, he would have changed the name of Theatre of the Oppressed to Theatre of Liberation (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994). It seems this lament is just as relevant for organisations as it is for society at large.

## Theoretical contribution and future study

This thesis makes a number of distinctive and significant theoretical contributions. First, it has shown that task-specific self-efficacy is significantly correlated with objectively measured, work-related performance in work-related settings when participants are working adults. Indeed, the composite task-specific self-efficacy measure created for analysis

purposes shows an even stronger correlation between task/job self-efficacy and work-related performance than previously found (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). The thesis also showed that individual differences do not appear to act as moderators of the task-specific self-efficacy/work-related performance relationship found by Judge et al (2007) and the limited influence general self-efficacy has on work-related performance. Therefore, measuring and controlling for task-specific self-efficacy is a critical factor for future studies seeking to determine the influence of other variables on work-related performance.

Second, the thesis introduced employee engagement as an important new variable in work-related performance studies at the individual level of analysis. Employee engagement was found to be an important, independent predictor of work-related performance that in one of two instances explained more variation in performance than past performance. The thesis showed how the affective component of employee engagement directly influences work-related performance in contrast to its cognitive component which appears to be largely measuring the same construct as self-efficacy beliefs. Overall the thesis makes an important contribution to employee engagement's role in explaining work-related performance at the individual level of analysis. Future studies of work-related performance should include a measure of employee engagement as an independent measure.

The third theoretical contribution of this thesis is the proposed common links between various definitions of engagement with self-efficacy (See Table 3, p. 49 in the Methodology chapter). The central unifying theme behind each of the three dimensions used in each definition is re-labelled as a single dimension under the proposed 'Learned Engagement' state. Consistent with the other states in Table 3, learned engagement operates as a cognitive-motivational state where psychological processes interact with environmental influences and individuals can discover and become skilled at engagement provided they are given the appropriate resources, control and reason to be engaged. The proposed 'Learned Engagement' state attempts to synthesise the alternative conceptualisations of engagement

and delineate its relationship with self-efficacy more clearly. Future studies should try to assess the relationship between self-efficacy, engagement and performance at the dimension level as the field study undertaken in this thesis found that although each of the three work engagement dimensions were strongly correlated with self-efficacy, there was a significant differential impact on these dimensions as a result of the self-efficacy intervention.

A fourth theoretical contribution of this thesis is illuminating the different ways that self-efficacy and engagement treat how affect influences work-related performance. In contrast to social cognitive theory where affect is regulated by the self-efficacy mechanism, this thesis suggests it is engagement's affective component that explains additional variance in work-related performance above and beyond that explained by self-efficacy. This is an important finding as previous studies of the relationship between affect and performance have highlighted affect's influence on employee satisfaction and intention to leave but not on objectively measured work-related performance. Therefore, this thesis has highlighted the role that employee engagement, as a construct that combines affective and cognitive components has on work-related performance.

The fifth theoretical contribution of the thesis is demonstrating how OT techniques can be used to boost self-efficacy beliefs, increase performance and mitigate the influence of adverse environmental impacts on employee engagement. This thesis showed how social cognitive theory explains the way in which OT interventions boost self-efficacy beliefs, particularly in the way they stimulate proactivity (personal agency and control), a willingness to undertake challenging tasks (confidence in competence) and demonstrate what success looks like (outcome expectancies). The three OT interventions used in the field experiment also provide an excellent example of Lewin's (1945) basic change model: Forum theatre 'unfreezes' people's existing frames of reference; Rehearse for reality 'changes' behaviour by providing the opportunity to practice new behaviours; and Entertainment-education 're-

freezes' and makes these new behaviours habitual. The combination of these three OT techniques works because as Schein notes about Lewin's (1945) basic change model:

"The key, of course, was to see that human change, whether at the individual or group level, was a profound psychological dynamic process that involved painful unlearning ***without loss of ego identity*** and ***difficult relearning*** as one ***cognitively attempted*** to restructure one's thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and attitudes.' (Schein, 1996, p. 28) (emphasis added)."

The process provided by linking OT interventions through Forum Theatre's reality duplication, the supportive coaching environment of Rehearse for Reality and the behavioural reinforcement provided by Entertainment-Education enable participants to move through the painful unlearning and difficult relearning processes without loss of ego identity. Therefore, OT interventions offer a theoretically sound basis for HR and OD professionals to improve employee engagement and performance within organisations.

Sixth, this thesis makes an important theoretical contribution to the empowerment, control and OT literatures by showing both the effects and limitations of OT interventions. On one hand, the thesis highlighted OT as an empowering experience for employees with its clear cut effects on self-efficacy beliefs and performance whilst on the other hand showing how OT can be characterised as a form of soft constraint that provides an alternative means for management to achieve corporate objectives. However there were distinct limits in the degree to which the creation of an open and reflective 'aesthetic space' helped employees overcome their 'powerlessness' as there was no change in their reported general self-efficacy, self-esteem or locus of control. Conversely, there were also noticeable limits to the amount of soft control OT interventions imposed on employees by management as personal control (emotional labour and felt responsibility for customers) decreased and there was no change in the level of concertive or normative control. Overall, the thesis found it is possible to have

both increased empowerment (self-efficacy) and control (performance) but challenged suggestions made by both OT's supporters and critics of its potentially wider impact and influence on employee empowerment and soft control.

The final theoretical contribution of this thesis was the creation of a proposed typology for OT interventions that draws on the framework for critically analysing theatre-based training originally developed by Nissley et al (2004). In the new typology, 'control of role' and 'control of script' axis' are combined into a single 'management control' axis and a new axis 'purpose and effect of the cathartic process' is introduced. The new framework suggests the role of catharsis is a crucial concept in OT as the emotional response of the audience serves to either: instil compliance and maintain the status quo (Corporate Theatre); motivate action through an 'unfreezing' process (Forum Theatre/Entertainment-Education); or generate creativity by trialling new behaviours (Intensified Role Play). OT provides a unique environment for emotional responses to the prospect of change to be surfaced and constructively channelled. The purpose and effect of the cathartic process is also reflected in the level of personal control and agency exhibited by participants after the OT intervention. This classification framework provides a means of understanding OT interventions in terms of the outcomes they produce.

Future studies of OT interventions would benefit from assessing each of the interventions as single events and monitoring participant responses accordingly rather than the combined intervention used here. Moreover, each of the main themes taken up in this thesis, in regard to self-efficacy, engagement and empowerment, would benefit from further exploration using fieldwork studies dedicated to exploring these specific issue areas.

The OT interventions in this thesis applied Lewin's (1945) basic change model so comprehensive qualitative and quantitative assessments of OT interventions using the detailed processes outlined by Schein (1996) of the 'unfreeze/move/refreeze' process would also be beneficial. Although this thesis clearly showed OT's limits on empowerment and control,

these limits may be a reflection of the type of organisation and industry studied. Therefore, future OT studies should be carried out in other industries and with more participants to test whether these limits apply elsewhere.

## Conclusion

This thesis used an OT intervention to examine the influence of self-efficacy and employee engagement on work-related performance in organisational settings. The thesis confirmed that self-efficacy plays a critical and largely unrecognised role in determining the discretionary effort exerted by employees that in turn drives individual and ultimately organisational performance. Therefore, focusing on employee confidence in their competence, sense of personal agency and outcome expectancies are important factors for HR/OD professionals to consider when designing and delivering training and change programs. This thesis also highlighted the similarities and differences between self-efficacy and the popular management concept of employee engagement. In particular, this thesis showed how engagement's affective component is an important, independent influence on performance above and beyond that explained by employee's self-efficacy.

This thesis demonstrated the application and effects of OT interventions on behaviour and performance. As a vehicle to promote self-efficacy beliefs, OT provides a novel and effective means to stimulate personal agency and lift confidence to undertake challenging tasks that leads to sustained behavioural change and increased performance. Although this thesis proved the empowering effect that OT has on employees, it also highlighted the limitations to the extent of this effect. Conversely, this thesis showed OT increased management control by reducing hard control and increasing soft constraint but that concurrently other mechanisms for soft control remained the same or decreased. Overall, OT does not appear to be either the panacea for fundamental organisation change its proponents claim or the nefarious means of employee manipulation that its detractors contend.

In summary, this thesis has made a distinct, original and significant contribution to management theory and practice. This thesis shows that it is indeed possible for employees and organisations to work collaboratively to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes in a win-win manner instead of win-lose. Perhaps OT offers a way to realise Douglas McGregor's vision of Theory Y management:

> "The essential task of management is to arrange organisational conditions and methods of operation so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing their own efforts towards organisational objectives (Heil, McGregor, Bennis, & Stephens, 2000)."

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# Appendices

## Part 1 – Self-efficacy related Appendices

### Appendix I – MGSM Working Paper 2008 – 6

*MACQUARIE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT*

**MGSM WORKING PAPERS IN MANAGEMENT**

**SELF-EFFICACY, MOTIVATION AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:**

**USING FORUM THEATRE TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**Richard Carter**
**Macquarie Graduate School of Management**

**MGSM WP 2008 - 6**
**September 2008**

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# SELF-EFFICACY, MOTIVATION AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: USING FORUM THEATRE TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE IN AUSTRALIA

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## Abstract

Self-efficacy is a social psychological construct that is conceptualized from an agentic perspective and refers to the motivation to perceive oneself as a causal agent. Numerous studies have shown a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and organization performance. A recent work place intervention within a division of a large Australian retail organization was designed to improve customer service on a sustainable basis using the 4 sources of self-efficacy information: enactive attainment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and emotional arousal. This information was delivered via a Forum Theatre setting, a technique traditionally used as a catalyst for political action amongst oppressed groups. Preliminary results suggest the intervention's format has led to an increase in employee self-efficacy as well as improved organizational performance, demonstrating that concern for the improvement and well-being of employees leads to better organizational results – doing well by doing good. This paper describes a proposed field experiment to formally investigate whether this intervention approach to improved customer service performance can be generalized to other organizations.

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## INTRODUCTION

What motivates people to work? Very few topics have generated as much management and academic interest in the organization behaviour and social psychology fields. Indeed, the topic of employee motivation plays a central role in the field of management, both practically and theoretically. Research in the field has a rich history (Herzberg, 1968; Maslow, 1970; McClelland, 1987; McGregor, 1985) and the search for high performance in business has historically been seen as a question of motivation (Fox, 2006). Indeed, the high level of recent interest in employee engagement (Saks, 2006) can be characterized as further evidence of management's preoccupation with understanding what drives employee motivation and involvement in the workplace. However, in spite of voluminous studies and analysis, work motivation theory development has stagnated (Steers et al., 2004) while motivation continues to be a hot topic (Trinca, 2006). Indeed, developing new perspectives has been identified as a critical step for work motivation theory to make another leap forward (Locke & Latham, 2004).

Work motivation has been defined as a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behaviour and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration (Pinder, 1998a). Consequently work motivation is seen to be a psychological process resulting from the interaction between the individual and the environment (Latham & Pinder, 2005). The strong influence of both psychology and social psychology on the current state of knowledge is illustrated by Locke and Latham (2004) where they present an integrated model of Work Motivation incorporating Goal Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Job Characteristics Theory, Attribution Theory and Distributive & Procedural Justice Theories. However, the psychological and social psychological focus limits by definition other frames of reference such as sociology, economics and politics for studying work motivation issues.

One alternative would be to use a sociological perspective to enhance the development of a more comprehensive understanding of how employees are motivated. The field of social psychology was clearly founded on the recognition that both disciplines have profound influences on human behaviour that can only be fully understood from this dual perspective. However, there is a long history of social psychology operating as two distinct fields under the one umbrella (Britt, 1937) and has been argued that the direction of strongest influence

has run from psychology to sociology (Thoits, 1995). In part this phenomenon is because sociologists more often assess the degree to which status characteristics, social relationships, and structural contexts influence individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors while psychologists more often explicate the mechanisms through which such social factors affect individuals (Thoits, 1995).

With respect to motivation specifically, a number of authors have stated the need for the field of sociology to develop a theory of motivation that is explicit, parsimonious and sociologically defensible (Gecas, 1991; McMahon, 1984; Turner, 1987). The lack of such a theory of motivation has hampered theory construction, contributed to an "over-socialized view of man" and handicapped the field's assessment of the relationship between institutions and individuals (Gecas, 1991). Given the call for new approaches to push work motivation theory to another level, it is timely to reflect on how a sociologically informed theory of motivation could contribute to our knowledge of what motivates people to work.

## SELF-EFFICACY'S ROLE IN WORK MOTIVATION

Within the field of social psychology, one area where there is a clear interface between sociology and psychology is the topic of self-efficacy (Thoits, 1995). The concept of self-efficacy is closely associated with the prominent personality psychologist Albert Bandura. Self-efficacy refers to people's judgment in one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands (Bandura, 1986). It has been identified as a key motivational construct within organizations (Gist & Mitchell, 1992) and is a core component of Locke and Latham's (2004) integrated model of work motivation. Within sociology, the motivational significance of self-efficacy dates back to Marx's (1844/1963) view of human nature as a process of self-creation through efficacious action in the context of work (Gecas, 1991). Indeed, a key feature of Marx's concept of alienation is powerlessness or a lack of self-efficacy (Gecas, 1991). As a result, the concept and study of self-efficacy is of great interest from both a psychological and sociological perspective.

***Agentic perspective.*** Self-efficacy is conceptualized from an agentic perspective and refers to the motivation to perceive oneself as a causal agent (Bandura, 1986; Gecas, 1991). As a result, self-efficacy affects goal choice and especially goal difficulty while both goals and self-efficacy affect performance through their effects on direction, effort, persistence and task

strategies or tactics (Locke & Latham, 2004). Self-efficacy has gained significant prominence in the field of social psychology in recent years and is also part of the renewed interest in the self-phenomenon (Gecas, 1989). Therefore, understanding the interaction between perceptions of the self, self-efficacy and motivation generally as well as work motivation specifically is of critical interest within the social psychology field.

***Self Formation.*** Self-efficacy scholars from all disciplines differentiate perceptions of self from perceptions of self in relation to the social environment (Gecas, 1989). However, while psychologists conceptualize expectancies as being specific to a particular task or situation (Bandura, 2006), sociologists and political scientists are more concerned with generalized expectancies about self and the social system (Gecas, 1989). As a consequence, although self-efficacy provides a common thread running between sociology and psychology with its causal agency focus, each discipline has approached the issue of self-efficacy from fundamentally different perspectives.

***Self Theory.*** From a traditional sociological point of view, the issue of voluntaristic action forms a long and rich history within sociology that goes to the heart of work motivation theory (Blumer, 1969; Parsons, 1937). Further, self-theory (considered to be synonymous with symbolic interactionism) conceptualizes the individual as an actor in their world which provides agentive qualities such as spontaneity and creativity (Gecas, 1989). From a psychological perspective, the notion of human agency is a critical facet of how people's motivation is activated and sustained. In this regard, goal theory is similarly rooted in an agentic perspective (Bandura 2003). Clearly the central notion of the individual's perception of their own agency is important to both disciplines.

***Symbolic Interactionism.*** The formation of the self and our perception of our own agency have long been of intense interest for both sociologists and psychologists. From a sociological perspective, symbolic interactionism provides a framework for viewing the self as a reflexive phenomenon with its constituent parts of the 'I' and the 'me' (Mead & Strauss, 1956). As the self-concept develops, the individual is motivated to maintain and enhance three motives associated with the self-concept: self-esteem; self-efficacy; and authenticity (Gecas, 1991). Each of these motives is influenced by socialization processes such as reflected appraisals, social comparisons, self-attributions, role learning and social identity development (Gecas, 1991). With respect to self-efficacy in particular, there are significant

parallels with the psychological processes articulated within Social Cognitive Theory such as the development of personal standards and social referential comparisons.

## NEW PERSPECTIVES TO SELF FORMATION

In recent years, an emerging sociological approach to the self reflects new emphases on power, reflexivity and social constructionism (Callero, 2003). This new perspective states that the self is the direct consequence of power and is brought into existence by imposing disciplinary practices on the body (Foucault et al., 1988). In this view, the traditional assumption of an individual with a core, rational, unitary self, endowed with an essential nature and an independent consciousness have been replaced by the perspective of the self as a mechanism of control where it is coerced into existence (Callero, 2003). As a consequence, the Enlightenment ideals of a universal self and the assumption of an agentic and knowledgeable actor have been dissolved (Elliott, 2001).

This emerging approach has been heavily criticized because it ignores the problem of seeking social change without free and active agents. Indeed, it sharply contrasts with self-efficacy's conceptualization of the individual as one who has the motivation to perceive oneself as a causal agent Nevertheless, this new approach has made a key contribution by connecting the study of the self with the historical deployment of power and demonstrates that the self is constituted within relations of control and is deeply embedded within systems of knowledge and discourse (Callero, 2003).

In common with traditional sociological perspectives such as symbolic interactionism, this new scholarship reinforces the principal that the self is socially constructed. Effectively, the self is both a social product (determined by the social world) and a social force (pre-given at birth) (Rosenberg, 1981). For example, the wide ranging use of psychological and psychiatric techniques to help individualize identities and invent ourselves has been examined at length (Rose, 1998). Similarly, the notion of homo economicus has evolved to a modern variation where man is being encouraged to adopt the guise of the enterprising or entrepreneurial self (Du Gay, 2000). The range of 'technologies of the self', a phrase originally coined by Foucault (1988), provides further evidence of the extent to which the self can be analyzed from a range of sociological and psychological points of view (Hollway, 1991). Given the above, a broader conceptualization of context that extends beyond the immediate situation (as

in symbolic interactionism) to include historical, cultural and social influences is necessary to gain a full understanding of self-meanings, self-images and self-concepts (Callero, 2003).

Therefore, a sociological perspective for understanding what motivates people to work and contributes to employee engagement would incorporate not only traditional sociological concepts such as reflexivity but extend them to include a new emphasis on power and a stronger focus on social constructionism. The challenge is to develop frameworks for analyzing the influence of power in particular in shaping the self and in turn, its impact on self-efficacy. Such an analysis could be conducted within the accepted practice of a social psychological field experiment in order to provide a credible means for demonstrating the impact on people. From a psychological point of view, such an approach would reinforce the prerogative of the individual's deterministic nature within their environment whilst from a sociological point of view the impact of broader environmental factors on an individual's concept of self and voluntaristic control of one's life would be examined. Therefore, undertaking research that views the self and self-efficacy from this dual perspective provides an arguably novel approach to the topic of work motivation and employee engagement.

## CHALLENGING MODERN WORK MOTIVATION PRACTICES

Contemporary management thinking with respect to employee motivation is still deeply shaped by a number of thought leaders including Elton Mayo, Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor and Frederick Herzberg. In some respects, the management principles and practices they advocated were a response to the perceived failings of Scientific Management as their research was conducted and theories developed in the mid part of the 20th century. These researchers formed the humanistic school of psychology and were principal influences on the development of mechanisms for employee motivation. Their research provided the rationale for the introduction of practices such as job enrichment, empowerment, devolved responsibility and a focus on salient outcomes as the prescription for employee motivation. Indeed, a survey of management textbooks and university courses demonstrates how much these historical figures continue to influence contemporary management thinking.

During the latter part of the 20th century, goal theory emerged as the single biggest influence on management practice with its concomitant use of incentives as rewards whenever goals are achieved. In this regard, the use of extrinsic rewards was reinforced by economic theory. Other work motivation related theories such as job characteristics theory, attribution theory, social cognitive theory, self-determination theory, distributive & procedural justice theory and social identity theory have been developed but have had limited impact on management thinking and hence practices. In addition, Locke and Latham (2004) found only limited or no empirical support for humanistic school concepts such as Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs where employees ostensibly desire a state of self-actualization or Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory which states that the use of extrinsic rewards depletes intrinsic motivation. As a consequence, the question of what motivates employees takes on even greater importance because core managerial assumptions are being challenged.

Given the above, it is understandable that self-efficacy has been eagerly embraced by management scholars because of its potential for application to work-related performances (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Although self-efficacy is a relatively recent addition to the organizational research agenda (Gist & Mitchell, 1992), it has been incorporated into an integrated model of work motivation (Locke, 1997). However, a review of a number of organizational behavior textbooks and course notes reveals that the concept of self-efficacy does not feature as a significant subject, particularly in relation to employee motivation. Further, discussions with HR practitioners suggest that self-efficacy has not been widely

adopted as a motivational tool for employees. Therefore, research into the application of the self-efficacy concept and practices within the workplace as an alternative approach to address the issues of employee motivation and engagement.

**Social Cognitive Theory**

Research on self-efficacy within social psychology has been heavily based on Bandura's (1986) construct derived within social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory sets out a comprehensive framework for how individuals develop a sense of self-efficacy using a personality psychology framework. The social cognitive approach views the person as a more-or-less rational and planful knower who actively seeks information in the social world and draws upon a rich storehouse of social knowledge in order to regulate his or her own behavior and enact plans and goals in a wide range of social environments (Markus & Wurf, 1987; McAdams, 2000).

Social cognitive theory posits a triadic reciprocal causation model in which behavior, cognitions and the environment all influence each other in a dynamic fashion (Bandura, 1986). Within social cognitive theory, self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Clearly the process by which one develops the necessary beliefs to act in a self-efficacious manner is critical as are the environmental influences that lead to these beliefs. Developing a comprehensive motivational framework that embraces the self-concept is critical because the self is a social product, emerging out of and dependent on social interaction (Gecas, 1991). Therefore studying self-efficacy from a combined sociological and psychological perspective will provide a more comprehensive view of the interaction between the self-concept and self-efficacy.

By definition, understanding how one forms self perceptions is of primary importance to psychologists. There is a very long list of terms and theories incorporating the 'self': self-actualization; self-attribution; self-determination; self-discrepancy; self-identity; and self-regulation are but a few. From a social cognitive perspective, the formation of a self-schema is a central concept in cognitive approaches to personality psychology and contains a vast and complex array of emotionally laden information (McAdams, 2000). Further, the self-schema contains multiple generalizations about the current, past and prominent possible selves that link the self to the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In this view, possible selves serve as the crucial link between motivation and cognition in understanding (McAdams, 2000).

Given the above, a critical research challenge is to determine the influence of self-efficacy principles and practices in shaping employee motivation. A key step will be to develop a better understanding of how we form a self image from a sociological point of view. Analyzing multiple perspectives of how the self is created i.e. (Du Gay, 2000; Foucault et al., 1988; Rose, 1998) using psychological techniques provides a novel means to assess how the self-concept is formed. The extent to which the self is socially constructed through these technologies will have an impact on an individual's self-efficaciousness. Once these influences have been measured and combined with traditional measures of self-efficacy from a psychological perspective, a new picture from a comprehensive social psychology view will be possible.

**Measuring self-efficacy**

There are several approaches to the measurement of self-efficacy (Gecas, 1989). These measures use typical self-reporting psychometric instruments and fall into a number of categories. For example, Bandura (1977) focuses on task-specific measures that relate to the competency or skill to the task at hand and are not intended to be a general measure of self-efficacy. Some measures are domain-specific such as a Health Locus of Control Scale (Wallston et al., 1976) which measures control orientations specific to the health area. Other scales have been developed to measure an individual's general sense of personal mastery and self-efficacy (Gecas, 1971; Pearlin, 1983; Sherer & et al., 1982).

***General self-efficacy.*** The development of self-efficacy scales has provided tools to undertake a wide range of self-efficacy based research. For example, a meta-analysis of self-efficacy and work related performance demonstrated the positive relationship between self-efficacy and different motivational outcomes in organization settings (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). This finding that self-efficacy is positively and strongly related to work-related performance is particularly noteworthy from a practitioner perspective (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). However, the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance is moderated by task complexity and locus of performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Therefore, applying self-efficacy practices in the workplace need to take these variables into account.

Notwithstanding the clear links between self-efficacy and work related performance, the measurement of self-efficacy is still rather primitive, even by social psychological standards

(Gecas, 1989). Although the state of self-efficacy scale development is due to the relatively recent emergence of self-efficacy in social psychological research (as distinct from previous sociological or psychological research into self-efficacy's predecessors), more extensive development of a general measure of self-efficacy is especially needed (Gecas, 1989). Such a measure would enable a more comprehensive understanding of people's perceptions of self-efficacy and what impact it may have on their motivation.

***Personal Agency and Control.*** The issue of agency and control is a major topic in both the psychology and sociology literature. From a psychological perspective, to be an agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances (Bandura, 1986). In this view, people are self-organizing, pro-active, self-regulating, and self-reflecting and are not simply onlookers of their behavior (Bandura, 2006). Human agency incorporates four core properties: intentionality; forethought; self-reactiveness; and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 1986). These four properties provide individuals with the cognitive frameworks to make choices about their actions.

Notwithstanding the distinctively human capabilities these frameworks enable, most human functioning is socially situated and therefore psychological concepts are socially embedded (Bandura, 1977). As a result, human agency is a product of not only intrapersonal determinants but also behavioral influences and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, social systems are created by human activity and in turn, social systems help to organize, guide and regulate human affairs (Bandura, 1986). This perspective is a close parallel to the symbolic interactionist tradition within sociology where the individual is primarily an actor in the environment, shaping and creating his/her world as well as being created by it (Gecas, 1989). Indeed, symbolic interaction theory (which is largely synonymous with self-theory) strongly emphasizes an active and creative view of the self. Clearly, both the psychological and traditional sociological disciplines view agency as a central issue of human functioning.

The heart of the issue for both sociologists and psychologists is that of control. For example, the extent to which the individual has control over his/her labor is a pre-condition of alienation (Marx & Bottomore, 1963). If the locus of control is outside the individual, then people become alienated (Gecas, 1989) or experience powerlessness (Seeman, 1983). Similarly, locus of control is a consistent concern for psychologists (deCharms & Muir, 1978;

Deci, 1985). To the extent an individual perceives that their environment is outside their control, their intrinsic motivation will be reduced (Deci, 1985).

***Competency.*** Another factor influencing an individual's self-efficacy is the perceived skill or competence they have to perform a required task or function. The notion of competence and personal mastery has been consistently raised as an important part of human functioning (Bandura, 1991; Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2002; Harter, 1978; White, 1959). People who believe they do not have the requisite skill will be unlikely to demonstrate persistent and sustained energy focusing on a given task because the likelihood of success is perceived to be low.

An individual's perception of their competence is governed by their efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1977). An efficacy expectation is a belief that one can successfully perform a particular action and is therefore a belief about one's competence (Bandura, 1977). Individuals develop their belief about their own competency through three sources: personal standards, social referential comparators, and self-reactive influences (Bandura, 1991). Personal standards are based on how significant persons react to an individual's behavior; through teaching; and through evaluative reactions of others to one's behavior (Bandura, 1991).

***Effectiveness.*** An individual's effectiveness is influenced by their perceptions of how the social environment impacts their ability to achieve certain outcomes. To the extent that an individual believes that a given action will lead to a certain outcome, they will feel more effective (Bandura, 1991). This belief has been categorized as an outcome expectation (Bandura, 1991) and has parallel's to the Expectancy Theory construct of outcome expectancy (Vroom & Deci, 1970). There has been some criticism about the perceived ambiguousness of the distinction between outcome expectation and efficacy expectation (Eastman & Marzillier, 1984). However, from a sociological perspective, the term "system responsiveness" provides a more appropriate label than outcome expectation (Gecas, 1989) and has been used to distinguish between self-perceived competence and a system's responsiveness (Almond & Verba, 1989; Barber, 1983). Therefore, to the extent individuals perceive the social environment will enable them to achieve an outcome expectation the "system" has been responsive.

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The ongoing interest in work motivation theories and employee engagement is being driven by numerous factors including globalization, work/life balance, information technology, new forms of working and the growth in service industries. In a service and information based economy, developing a deeper and broader understanding of the factors that impact employee motivation. From an Australian perspective, the float of the Australian dollar, abandonment of the centralized arbitration system, ongoing reduction in tariffs, privatization of many government enterprises and more robust regulatory environment have all served to intensify competition and stimulate the economy. In turn, this strong economic growth has led to historically high levels of employment and ever increasing competition to attract, motivate and retain good employees.

Yet how well do modern Australian managers understand how to motivate employees? Historically, the centralized nature of Australia's wage fixing system has largely obviated the need for management to focus on understanding the extrinsic needs of employees and develop appropriate reward structures. Further, the relatively closed nature of Australia's economic and industrial system greatly reduced the need for management to understand employee needs and provide appropriate workplace environments. Over the past 20 years, Australian managers have largely relied on international (principally American) research and management practices to foster higher levels of employee motivation and engagement as organizations have adapted to changes in the socio-economic environment. Although many of the concepts used have application in the workplace, Australia's unique workplace heritage and national culture suggest that simply copying overseas models is unlikely to be the most effective means of improving motivation. Given the ongoing international interest in employee motivation and engagement and call for new perspectives to work motivation theories, taking a fresh approach is sensible.

From a historical perspective, using social constructionism practices to create societal norms that institutionalize work motivation for the good of the individual is common. Religious philosophies typically used work as a vehicle to enshrine societal discipline: in the Judeo-Christian tradition, work was punishment for man's original sin; in the Islamic tradition, work was the way to make man pleasing and acceptable to God; in the Buddhist tradition, Nirvana was reached through hard work (MOW International Researc Team, 1987). In contrast, prior to the American industrial revolution, the need to 'motivate' man to work was relatively foreign as profits were effectively shared once goods were sold so workers and the owners of

the means of production had a common goal (Jacques, 1996). However, since the introduction of 'salary and wages' to American commerce, work has been characterized as a vehicle for success and salvation (Jacques, 1996) while the quintessentially American life story and culture of work and entrepreneurial drive reinforces the importance of self-redemption (McAdams, 2006). Indeed, the use of psychological techniques to validate work as an intrinsically satisfying experience provides another example of how social constructionism has institutionalized work motivation as a means of governing the soul (Rose, 1999).

From a sociological perspective, although the general theme of action and agency is well established within symbolic interaction theory, the topic of self-efficacy is rarely treated explicitly (Gecas, 1989). To date, research on self-efficacy within sociology has mainly dealt within the broader theme of social structure and culture. As organizations are complex social institutions with sophisticated social structures and diverse cultures, developing a greater understanding of the impact of sociological and anthropological factors such as structure and culture on self-efficacy is crucial. Further, gaining insight into social factors that impact the self-concept is an essential part of assessing self-efficacy's impact on employee motivation. In this regard, symbolic interaction provides a framework for understanding the factors that may enhance an individual's self-efficacy as they move beyond infancy (Gecas, 1989).
From a psychological perspective, most research has been carried out on the consequences of self-efficacy and on its early development (Gecas, 1989).

With respect to consequences, a number of studies have reported on the beneficial effects of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Seeman, 1983; Seligman, 2006) from both a physical and mental health point of view. Although there are limitations to the therapeutic consequences of self-efficacy (Gecas, 1989), its application within a work environment would arguably have similar effects. The development of self-efficacy is achieved through sources of efficacy information such as personal mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977). In this regard, the family context is a primary influence on self-efficacy development. Importantly, it is how we perceive our performance successes that are the key to efficacious children, a finding that is consistent with both symbolic interactionist and psychological frameworks. However, the explicit use of self-efficacy in Australian organizational settings and its impact on employee motivation is not well documented.

Therefore, from a variety of perspectives, research into the impact of self-efficacy principles and practices on work motivation and employee engagement, particularly within Australian organizations is needed. Understanding how individuals develop a sense of agency within an organizational setting as well as reconciling the different views of self are important sociological and psychological issues. The themes of agency, personal control and perceived competence are central to both disciplines and therefore the study of self-efficacy is eminently suited to appraisal within a broad social psychological framework. Both disciplines offer different perspectives and methodologies to interpret the meaning and effect of self-efficacy in practice. In addition, increasing self efficacy has been clearly demonstrated to have a positive impact on individual mental and physical health and well-being. Therefore, studying self-efficacy in the workplace may concurrently yield insights into how individuals can achieve a better work-life balance, help cope with stress and achieve an improved level of self-realisation and perceived control. In effect, organizations introducing self-efficacy principles and practices have the potential of "Doing Well by Doing Good".

**Summary and Hypotheses**

The positive relationship between self-efficacy and work motivation has been clearly established from a theoretical perspective. However, empirical work is needed in the workplace to determine how self perceptions of general self-efficacy affect work motivation and employee engagement. In addition, the extent to which self perceptions of personal agency and control, competency and effectiveness (the specific elements within self-efficacy) are related to work motivation and employee engagement also needs to be investigated in a workplace environment. Besides the relationship between absolute levels of general self-efficacy, personal agency and control, competency and effectiveness, it is critical to understand the impact an intervention designed to improve self-efficacy has on individual perceptions of general self-efficacy, personal agency and control, competency and effectiveness. To the extent that individual perceptions change and a positive relationship between self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement is found, support for self-efficacy based interventions to improve organizational performance will be reinforced. The proceeding discussion leads to the following hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1a – Individual's with a higher general sense of self-efficacy will have a correspondingly higher level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 1b – Increasing an individual's general sense of self-efficacy will result in an increase in their level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 2a - Individual's with a stronger sense of personal agency will have a correspondingly higher level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 2b - Increasing an individual's sense of personal agency will result in an increase in their level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 3a - Individual's with a perceived higher level of competence will have a correspondingly higher level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 3b - Increasing an individual's perceived level of competence will result in an increase in their level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 4a - Individual's with a higher perceived level of effectiveness will have a correspondingly higher level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 4b - Increasing an individual's perceived level of effectiveness will result in an increase in their level of work motivation.*

## PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

### Overview

A key issue when undertaking research on a topic common to two disciplines is developing a methodology that satisfies one without antagonizing the other. In spite of the overarching "social psychology" label both founding disciplines use, their discourse and paradigm are arguably very different. This issue is a long standing one (Britt, 1937).

To determine what impact the meaning of and changes to self-efficacy may have on work motivation and employee engagement, field research will be required. In order to adopt both a sociological and psychological perspective, a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques will be required. The qualitative techniques will enable an inductive and descriptive evaluation of the ways in which employees interpret and ascribe meaning to self-efficacy. The quantitative techniques will provide a statistical measure of self-efficacy and its antecedents. Both techniques will be used to undertake pre and post evaluation of changes to perceptions of self-efficacy as a result of an intervention designed to increase individual self-efficacy in a work setting.

***Host Organizations.*** Three companies from different industries will act as host organizations. An intervention based on improving the customer service skills of individuals working with the host organizations will be designed based on self-efficacy principles and practices. The proposed industries and job types are:

Financial Services (frontline branch and contact centre employees)
Retail (sales/service assistants and cashiers)
Hospitality/Property (food and beverage servers and security officers)

These companies are all considered to be service industries and as a result are reliant on customer service as a key point of differentiation with competitors. As customer service processes are relatively similar across industries, it will be feasible to generalize the results to other industries. Another factor favoring an intervention based on customer service is that it can be independently observed and measured from the customers point of view using techniques such as mystery shopping. While customer service can be viewed as a global attitude, it can also be viewed as a competence to be developed and is therefore an acquirable skill.

These industries have been chosen because they have relatively low skill levels necessary for new entrants. Partially as a result, employee turnover tends to be high and there are significant issues with regards to employee motivation. The job types nominated all involve direct customer interaction but have a variety of face to face vs. separated; transaction vs. sales; and service vs. compliance foci. The nominated companies are all large Australian public companies and have a range of workplace environments. Therefore, from a sociological point of view, having both large and small workplace environments within large organizations will facilitate understanding the effect of structure, bureaucratization, control and culture.

**Stage 1 – Recruit Host Organizations**

Preliminary discussions have been held with a number of potential host organizations. Each host organization would be required to contribute up to $20,000 towards the research, principally to cover the cost of conducting Stage 5 – Customer Service Training Intervention. Host organizations would need to provide access to employees for interviews and quantitative data collection. In addition, host organizations would be responsible for releasing 80 employees for the training sessions for one day.

**Stage 2 – Observational Research**

Up to two weeks will be spent at each organization developing a better understanding of structure, roles, norms, values and any other social factors that may influence behavior. A review of HR material including induction programs, training materials, performance appraisal systems, recruitment and selection procedures and remuneration policies will be undertaken. Attendance and observation of training sessions including an induction program would be made. At the end of the two weeks, a good working knowledge of the organization's culture and social environment will be gained.

**Stage 3 – Employee Interviews**

A minimum of one week will be spent at each organization conducting a minimum of 15 interviews with front line employees relating to self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement. Approximately 10 existing employees with more than 1 years' service and 5 new employees with less than 3 months service will be interviewed. The aim of the interviews is to collect as much qualitative data as possible concerning the environmental factors that have influenced employee perceptions of self-efficacy. Possible questions include:

How do we as individuals form judgments of self?

To what extent do environmental factors determine our view of self?
Are there multiple selves and how do we reconcile these with expectations about work?
How do we form a belief that the self can successfully perform a particular action and that a given action will lead to a certain outcome?

Other factors to be discussed include long-term social ones such as the impact of family, school, peers, institutions, media and other employment on self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement. Employees will also be asked about their perceptions of the level of agency, competence and effectiveness they feel working at their host organization. Finally, employee perceptions of how their employer's induction and on-going training programs have impacted their self-efficacy will be explored.

**Stage 4 – Scale Selection, Modification and/or Development**

The information from Stages 1 and 2 will be collated and key themes and issues identified prior to conducting a review of existing general self-efficacy scales as well as any specific self efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement scales. The review may determine that an existing scale will perform adequately or will provide a solid basis for a revised scale. The final output of this stage will be a new or updated General Self-Efficacy scale and Work Motivation and Employee Engagement subscales.

**Stage 5 – Pre-test of General Self-Efficacy and Work Motivation**

The new instrument will be used to measure General Self-Efficacy, Work Motivation and Employee Engagement within the three host organizations. A target total of 960 surveys (320 per host organization) will be distributed and collected. Half of the surveys (160) will be distributed to 'new' (less than 12 months working at the host organization) and the other half of the surveys (160) will be distributed to existing (more than 12 months service at the host organization. Within each organization, the surveys will be split equally between the two nominated job categories (80 for each). The table below illustrates the number of surveys being distributed to each employee classification.

| | **Financial Service** | **Retail** | **Hospitality** |
|---|---|---|---|
| New – Job Type 1 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| Existing – Job Type 1 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| New – Job Type 2 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| Existing – Job Type 2 | 80 | 80 | 80 |

If possible, participants will be selected on the basis of their store location to facilitate dividing each participant segment into two groups. At a later date, one group will be invited to participate in a training intervention designed to improve an individual's self-efficacy with respect to customer service and its impact on work motivation.

**Stage 6 – Customer Service Training Intervention**

Each cell of the surveyed employees will be split into 2 groups of 40 participants. One group will participate in a customer service training intervention while the other group will have not training and therefore act as a control group. Within each Job Type, two, 1 Day customer service improvement workshops will be held with up to 20 people attending each. The workshops will use one facilitator and two actors to lead participants through a program designed to improve each participant's self-efficacy, particularly in relation to customer service. The focus will be on providing the opportunity for participants to experience each of the four means by which self-efficacy improves: Vicarious learning; personal mastery; verbal persuasion and emotional arousal.

The primary vehicle for enabling participants to improve their self-efficacy is a form of simultaneous dramaturgy known as Forum Theatre created by Augusto Boal. Participants (spectators) will watch a scripted performance by the actors illustrating poor customer service scenarios within the company based on mystery shopping experiences. At the end of each scenario, participants will have the opportunity to point out inappropriate customer service behavior. The actors will then reprise the scripted scenarios but at any point, participants (now referred to as spect-actors) may call out "stop!" and either take the actor's place or coach the actor on the appropriate behavior. Through this process of active participation, spect-actors become empowered to achieve individual, group and even organizational change.

Participants are encouraged to not only imagine the required change but are actually given the opportunity to practice it. In effect, participants experience all 4 forms of improved self-efficacy through learning vicariously, practicing personal mastery, receiving verbal coaching and experiencing heightened emotional arousal throughout the performance.

At the end of each workshop, participants should, at a minimum, judge they are more competent than before with respect to customer service. The ability to exert personal agency and perceive one is effective in the workplace will be somewhat contingent on the environment at each host organization. To the extent that the workplace environment, both at a local level and across the host organization, supports the individual in practicing their refined customer service skills, the more the participant will feel they have personal agency to have impact.

**Stage 7 – Post-test of General Self-Efficacy and Work Motivation**

Approximately 3 months after the customer service training initiative, all previous respondents will be sent the General Self Efficacy, Work Motivation and Employee Engagement instrument to complete a second time. The results will then be compared with the previous survey to see what change, if any, has occurred in participant's sense of self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement. The results for participants in the customer service training intervention will also be compared to what change, if any, has occurred in the control group in order to account for any global or organization wide changes that may have occurred.

**Stage 8 – Data Analysis**

The pre and post-test sets of data will be compared across the entire participant population as well as between organizations. These comparisons will highlight what, if any, general changes have resulted in participant self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement as well as between organizations. In addition, intra-organization comparisons will be conducted between the two different job categories. Similarly, job categories across all 3 host organizations will also be compared to determine to what extent the nature of individual jobs may have impacted self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement. The findings from the earlier qualitative research will be reviewed in light of the quantitative information to illuminate possible reasons for differences.

**Conclusion**

The research program outlined has the potential to make a contribution in a number of ways. First, by adopting elements of a sociological approach to work motivation, it is an attempt to meet the call to introduce new perspectives to the field's theoretical development. In particular, the focus on self-efficacy and the underlying concept of human agency embodied within it recognized by both the sociology and psychology disciplines provides elements of a common discourse that recognizes both the social nature of organizations and individual's that work within them.

Second, the focus on self-efficacy provides a new way for management to think about work motivation and employee engagement. Rather than the traditional use of extrinsic and intrinsic incentives, a focus on helping people to develop a greater sense of self-efficacy through increased perceived control, competence and effectiveness will help to frame the way in which managers think about employee motivation.

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**Appendix II – MGSM Working Paper 2008 – 7**

*MACQUARIE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT*

## MGSM WORKING PAPERS IN MANAGEMENT

# SELF-EFFICACY, MOTIVATION AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: EMPOWERING WORKERS USING FORUM THEATRE

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**MGSM WP 2008 - 7**
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**Title: Self-efficacy, Motivation and Employee Engagement: Empowering Workers Using Forum Theatre**

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# SELF-EFFICACY, MOTIVATION AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: EMPOWERING WORKERS USING FORUM THEATRE

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**Abstract**

Self-efficacy is a social psychological construct that is conceptualized from an agentic perspective and refers to the motivation to perceive oneself as a causal agent. Numerous studies have shown a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and organization performance. A recent work place intervention within a division of a large Australian retail organization was designed to improve customer service on a sustainable basis using the 4 sources of self-efficacy information: enactive attainment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and emotional arousal. This information was delivered via a Forum Theatre setting, a technique traditionally used as a catalyst for political action amongst oppressed groups. Preliminary results suggest the intervention's format has led to an increase in employee self-efficacy as well as improved organizational performance, demonstrating that concern for the improvement and well-being of employees leads to better organizational results – doing well by doing good. This paper describes a proposed field experiment to formally investigate whether this intervention approach to improved customer service performance can be generalized to other organizations.

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## Introduction

Why do people work? Sociologists have long been concerned with developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between work and society (Arendt, 1958; Marx & Bottomore, 1963; Wolff & Durkheim, 1960). How do people develop beliefs about the value of working in one's life? What social standards or norms are concerned with creating an obligation of the individual to society? Conversely, what social standards or norms underlie the rights of the person and the obligation of society to the individual? What outcomes do people gain from working? How would society function if people didn't work? On the other hand, how would people function if they didn't have to work? These issues are increasingly important as technological advances and globalization continue to change the very nature of work.

Given that work (defined as paid employment and not including other forms of work such as school, volunteer or house work) has been characterized as providing the very foundation of moral order in society (MOW International Researc Team, 1987), understanding how social influences affect the meaning people attach to work is critical. Historically, religion has played a key role in providing a socially constructed frame of reference for people to attach meaning to the work they perform. Indeed, the role of religion in creating a nexus between work and society was of primary concern to Marx who argued that religion (or at least Christianity) had provided the ideological superstructure for capitalism (Livingston & Fiorenza, 1997). Marx argued that individuals sought self-determination, intentionality and creativity through 'praxis'. However, Marx believed that workers were alienated from nature as well as the product of their labor because it was not an expression of themselves but simply a means to prolong their physical existence. As a result, the individual is alienated from their human essence and from their fellow human beings with the crucial problem being that alienated individuals lack the practical power to take meaningful action.

The theme of Marx's view that individuals seek self-determination, intentionality and creativity through work has effectively been picked up by the humanistic psychology movement of the 20$^{th}$ Century. Starting with the famous Hawthorne experiments of the 1930's, a string of theories purportedly demonstrated the individual's intrinsic needs for achievement were developed including Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1970), McGregor's Theory Y (McGregor, 1985), Herzberg's hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1968) and

McClelland's needs based theories of human motivation (McClelland, 1987). These theories stressed management's role in fostering motivated employees and have had a pivotal influence on management's approach to employees as the search for high performance in business has historically been seen as a question of motivation (Fox, 2006). Indeed, the high level of recent interest in employee engagement (Saks, 2006) can be characterized as further evidence of management's preoccupation with understanding what drives employee motivation, involvement and engagement in the workplace.

Work motivation has been defined as a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration (Pinder, 1998a). Consequently work motivation is typically seen to be a psychological process resulting from the interaction between the individual and the environment (Latham & Pinder, 2005). However, this psychological focus limits by definition other frames of reference such as sociology and politics for studying work motivation issues. An alternative would be to use a sociological perspective to enhance the development of a more comprehensive understanding of how employees are motivated. In this regard, a number of authors have stated the need for the field of sociology to develop a theory of motivation that is explicit, parsimonious and sociologically defensible (Gecas, 1991; McMahon, 1984; Turner, 1987). The lack of such a theory of motivation has hampered theory construction, contributed to an "over-socialized view of man" and handicapped the field's assessment of the relationship between institutions and individuals (Gecas, 1991).

One alternative would be to use a sociological perspective to enhance the development of a more comprehensive understanding of how employees are motivated. The field of social psychology was clearly founded on the recognition that both disciplines have profound influences on human behavior that can only be fully understood from this dual perspective. However, there is a long history of social psychology operating as two distinct fields under the one umbrella (Britt, 1937) and has been argued that the direction of strongest influence has run from psychology to sociology (Thoits, 1995). In part this phenomenon is because sociologists more often assess the degree to which status characteristics, social relationships, and structural contexts influence individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors while psychologists more often explicate the mechanisms through which such social factors affect individuals (Thoits, 1995).

With respect to motivation specifically, a number of authors have stated the need for the field of sociology to develop a theory of motivation that is explicit, parsimonious and sociologically defensible (Gecas, 1991; McMahon, 1984; Turner, 1987). The lack of such a theory of motivation has hampered theory construction, contributed to an "over-socialized view of man" and handicapped the field's assessment of the relationship between institutions and individuals (Gecas, 1991). Given the call for new approaches to push work motivation theory to another level, it is timely to reflect on how a sociologically informed theory of motivation could contribute to our knowledge of what motivates people to work.

## SELF-EFFICACY'S ROLE IN WORK MOTIVATION

Within the field of social psychology, one area where there is a clear interface between sociology and psychology is the topic of self-efficacy (Thoits, 1995). The concept of self-efficacy is closely associated with the prominent personality psychologist Albert Bandura. Self-efficacy refers to people's judgment in one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands (Bandura, 1986). It has been identified as a key motivational construct within organizations (Gist & Mitchell, 1992) and is a core component of (Locke & Latham, 2004) integrated model of work motivation. Within sociology, the motivational significance of self-efficacy dates back to Marx's (1844/1963) view of human nature as a process of self-creation through efficacious action in the context of work (Gecas, 1991). Indeed, a key feature of Marx's concept of alienation is powerlessness or a lack of self-efficacy (Gecas, 1991). As a result, the concept and study of self-efficacy is of great interest from both a psychological and sociological perspective.

***Agentic perspective.*** Self-efficacy is conceptualized from an agentic perspective and refers to the motivation to perceive oneself as a causal agent (Bandura, 1986; Gecas, 1991). As a result, self-efficacy affects goal choice and especially goal difficulty while both goals and self-efficacy affect performance through their effects on direction, effort, persistence and task strategies or tactics (Locke & Latham, 2004). Self-efficacy has gained significant prominence in the field of social psychology in recent years and is also part of the renewed interest in the self phenomenon (Gecas, 1989). Therefore, understanding the interaction between perceptions of the self, self-efficacy and motivation generally as well as work motivation specifically is of critical interest within the social psychology field.

***Self Formation.*** Self-efficacy scholars from all disciplines differentiate perceptions of self from perceptions of self in relation to the social environment (Gecas, 1989). However, while psychologists conceptualize expectancies as being specific to a particular task or situation (Bandura, 2006), sociologists and political scientists are more concerned with generalized expectancies about self and the social system (Gecas, 1989). As a consequence, although self-efficacy provides a common thread running between sociology and psychology with its causal agency focus, each discipline has approached the issue of self-efficacy from fundamentally different perspectives.

***Self Theory.*** From a traditional sociological point of view, the issue of voluntaristic action forms a long and rich history within sociology that goes to the heart of work motivation theory (Blumer, 1969; Parsons, 1937). Further, self-theory (considered to be synonymous with symbolic interactionism) conceptualizes the individual as an actor in their world which provides agentive qualities such as spontaneity and creativity (Gecas, 1989). From a psychological perspective, the notion of human agency is a critical facet of how people's motivation is activated and sustained. In this regard, goal theory is similarly rooted in an agentic perspective (Bandura 2003). Clearly the central notion of the individual's perception of their own agency is important to both disciplines.

***Symbolic Interactionism.*** The formation of the self and our perception of our own agency have long been of intense interest for both sociologists and psychologists. From a sociological perspective, symbolic interactionism provides a framework for viewing the self as a reflexive phenomenon with its constituent parts of the 'I' and the 'me' (Mead & Strauss, 1956). As the self-concept develops, the individual is motivated to maintain and enhance three motives associated with the self-concept: self-esteem; self-efficacy; and authenticity (Gecas, 1991). Each of these motives is influenced by socialization processes such as reflected appraisals, social comparisons, self-attributions, role learning and social identity development (Gecas, 1991). With respect to self-efficacy in particular, there are significant parallels with the psychological processes articulated within Social Cognitive Theory such as the development of personal standards and social referential comparisons.

## NEW PERSPECTIVES TO SELF FORMATION

In recent years, an emerging sociological approach to the self reflects new emphases on power, reflexivity and social constructionism (Callero, 2003). This new perspective states

that the self is the direct consequence of power and is brought into existence by imposing disciplinary practices on the body (Foucault et al., 1988). In this view, the traditional assumption of an individual with a core, rational, unitary self, endowed with an essential nature and an independent consciousness have been replaced by the perspective of the self as a mechanism of control where it is coerced into existence (Callero, 2003). As a consequence, the Enlightenment ideals of a universal self and the assumption of an agentic and knowledgeable actor have been dissolved (Elliott, 2001).

This emerging approach has been heavily criticized because it ignores the problem of seeking social change without free and active agents. Indeed, it sharply contrasts with self-efficacy's conceptualization of the individual as one who has the motivation to perceive oneself as a causal agent Nevertheless, this new approach has made a key contribution by connecting the study of the self with the historical deployment of power and demonstrates that the self is constituted within relations of control and is deeply embedded within systems of knowledge and discourse (Callero, 2003).

In common with traditional sociological perspectives such as symbolic interactionism, this new scholarship reinforces the principal that the self is socially constructed. Effectively, the self is both a social product (determined by the social world) and a social force (pre-given at birth) (Rosenberg, 1981). For example, the wide ranging use of psychological and psychiatric techniques to help individualize identities and invent our selves has been examined at length (Rose, 1998). Similarly, the notion of homo economicus has evolved to a modern variation where man is being encouraged to adopt the guise of the enterprising or entrepreneurial self (Du Gay, 2000). The range of 'technologies of the self', a phrase originally coined by Foucault (1988), provides further evidence of the extent to which the self can be analyzed from a range of sociological and psychological points of view (Hollway, 1991). Given the above, a broader conceptualization of context that extends beyond the immediate situation (as in symbolic interactionism) to include historical, cultural and social influences is necessary to gain a full understanding of self-meanings, self-images and self-concepts (Callero, 2003).

Therefore, a sociological perspective for understanding what motivates people to work and contributes to employee engagement would incorporate not only traditional sociological concepts such as reflexivity but extend them to include a new emphasis on power and a stronger focus on social constructionism. The challenge is to develop frameworks for analyzing the influence of power in particular in shaping the self and in turn, its impact on

self-efficacy. Such an analysis could be conducted within the accepted practice of a social psychological field experiment in order to provide a credible means for demonstrating the impact on people. From a psychological point of view, such an approach would reinforce the prerogative of the individual's deterministic nature within their environment whilst from a sociological point of view the impact of broader environmental factors on an individual's concept of self and voluntaristic control of one's life would be examined. Therefore, undertaking research that views the self and self-efficacy from this dual perspective provides an arguably novel approach to the topic of work motivation and employee engagement.

## CHALLENGING MODERN WORK MOTIVATION PRACTICES

Contemporary management thinking with respect to employee motivation is still deeply shaped by a number of thought leaders including Elton Mayo, Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor and Frederick Herzberg. In some respects, the management principles and practices they advocated were a response to the perceived failings of Scientific Management as their research was conducted and theories developed in the mid part of the 20th century. These researchers formed the humanistic school of psychology and were principal influences on the development of mechanisms for employee motivation. Their research provided the rationale for the introduction of practices such as job enrichment, empowerment, devolved responsibility and a focus on salient outcomes as the prescription for employee motivation. Indeed, a survey of management textbooks and university courses demonstrates how much these historical figures continue to influence contemporary management thinking.

During the latter part of the 20th century, goal theory emerged as the single biggest influence on management practice with its concomitant use of incentives as rewards whenever goals are achieved. In this regard, the use of extrinsic rewards was reinforced by economic theory. Other work motivation related theories such as job characteristics theory, attribution theory, social cognitive theory, self-determination theory, distributive & procedural justice theory and social identity theory have been developed but have had limited impact on management thinking and hence practices. In addition, Locke and Latham (2004) found only limited or no empirical support for humanistic school concepts such as Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs where employees ostensibly desire a state of self-actualization or Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory which states that the use of extrinsic rewards depletes intrinsic motivation. As a consequence, the question of what motivates employees takes on even greater importance because core managerial assumptions are being challenged.

Given the above, it is understandable that self-efficacy has been eagerly embraced by management scholars because of its potential for application to work-related performances (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Although self-efficacy is a relatively recent addition to the organizational research agenda (Gist & Mitchell, 1992), it has been incorporated into an integrated model of work motivation (Locke, 1997). However, a review of a number of organizational behavior textbooks and course notes reveals that the concept of self-efficacy does not feature as a significant subject, particularly in relation to employee motivation. Further, discussions with HR practitioners suggest that self-efficacy has not been widely adopted as a motivational tool for employees. Therefore, research into the application of the self-efficacy concept and practices within the workplace as an alternative approach to address the issues of employee motivation and engagement.

**Social Cognitive Theory**

Research on self-efficacy within social psychology has been heavily based on Bandura's (1986) construct derived within social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory sets out a comprehensive framework for how individuals develop a sense of self-efficacy using a personality psychology framework. The social cognitive approach views the person as a more-or-less rational and planful knower who actively seeks information in the social world and draws upon a rich storehouse of social knowledge in order to regulate his or her own behavior and enact plans and goals in a wide range of social environments (Markus & Wurf, 1987; McAdams, 2000).

Social cognitive theory posits a triadic reciprocal causation model in which behavior, cognitions and the environment all influence each other in a dynamic fashion (Bandura, 1986). Within social cognitive theory, self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Clearly the process by which one develops the necessary beliefs to act in a self-efficacious manner is critical as are the environmental influences that lead to these beliefs. Developing a comprehensive motivational framework that embraces the self-concept is critical because the self is a social product, emerging out of and dependent on social interaction (Gecas, 1991). Therefore studying self-efficacy from a combined sociological and psychological perspective will provide a more comprehensive view of the interaction between the self-concept and self-efficacy.

By definition, understanding how one forms self perceptions is of primary importance to psychologists. There is a very long list of terms and theories incorporating the 'self': self-actualization; self-attribution; self-determination; self-discrepancy; self-identity; and self-regulation are but a few. From a social cognitive perspective, the formation of a self-schema is a central concept in cognitive approaches to personality psychology and contains a vast and complex array of emotionally laden information (McAdams, 2000). Further, the self-schema contains multiple generalizations about the current, past and prominent possible selves that link the self to the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In this view, possible selves serve as the crucial link between motivation and cognition in understanding (McAdams, 2000).

Given the above, a critical research challenge is to determine the influence of self-efficacy principles and practices in shaping employee motivation. A key step will be to develop a better understanding of how we form a self-image from a sociological point of view. Analyzing multiple perspectives of how the self is created i.e. (Du Gay, 2000; Foucault et al., 1988; Rose, 1998) using psychological techniques provides a novel means to assess how the self-concept is formed. The extent to which the self is socially constructed through these technologies will have an impact on an individual's self-efficaciousness. Once these influences have been measured and combined with traditional measures of self-efficacy from a psychological perspective, a new picture from a comprehensive social psychology view will be possible.

**Measuring self-efficacy**

There are several approaches to the measurement of self-efficacy (Gecas, 1989). These measures use typical self-reporting psychometric instruments and fall into a number of categories. For example, Bandura (1977) focuses on task-specific measures that relate to the competency or skill to the task at hand and are not intended to be a general measure of self-efficacy. Some measures are domain-specific such as a Health Locus of Control Scale (Wallston et al., 1976) which measures control orientations specific to the health area. Other scales have been developed to measure an individual's general sense of personal mastery and self-efficacy (Gecas, 1971; Pearlin, 1983; Sherer & et al., 1982).

***General self-efficacy.*** The development of self-efficacy scales has provided tools to undertake a wide range of self-efficacy based research. For example, a meta-analysis of self-efficacy and work related performance demonstrated the positive relationship between self-efficacy and different motivational outcomes in organization settings (Stajkovic & Luthans,

1998). This finding that self-efficacy is positively and strongly related to work-related performance is particularly noteworthy from a practitioner perspective (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). However, the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance is moderated by task complexity and locus of performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Therefore, applying self-efficacy practices in the workplace need to take these variables into account.

Notwithstanding the clear links between self-efficacy and work related performance, the measurement of self-efficacy is still rather primitive, even by social psychological standards (Gecas, 1989). Although the state of self-efficacy scale development is due to the relatively recent emergence of self-efficacy in social psychological research (as distinct from previous sociological or psychological research into self-efficacy's predecessors), more extensive development of a general measure of self-efficacy is especially needed (Gecas, 1989). Such a measure would enable a more comprehensive understanding of people's perceptions of self-efficacy and what impact it may have on their motivation.

***Personal Agency and Control.*** The issue of agency and control is a major topic in both the psychology and sociology literature. From a psychological perspective, to be an agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances (Bandura, 1986). In this view, people are self-organizing, pro-active, self-regulating, and self-reflecting and are not simply onlookers of their behavior (Bandura, 2006). Human agency incorporates four core properties: intentionality; forethought; self-reactiveness; and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 1986). These four properties provide individuals with the cognitive frameworks to make choices about their actions.

Notwithstanding the distinctively human capabilities these frameworks enable, most human functioning is socially situated and therefore psychological concepts are socially embedded (Bandura, 1977). As a result, human agency is a product of not only intrapersonal determinants but also behavioral influences and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, social systems are created by human activity and in turn, social systems help to organize, guide and regulate human affairs (Bandura, 1986). This perspective is a close parallel to the symbolic interactionist tradition within sociology where the individual is primarily an actor in the environment, shaping and creating his/her world as well as being created by it (Gecas, 1989). Indeed, symbolic interaction theory (which is largely synonymous with self-theory) strongly emphasizes an active and creative view of the self.

Clearly, both the psychological and traditional sociological disciplines view agency as a central issue of human functioning.

The heart of the issue for both sociologists and psychologists is that of control. For example, the extent to which the individual has control over his/her labor is a pre-condition of alienation (Marx & Bottomore, 1963). If the locus of control is outside the individual, then people become alienated (Gecas, 1989) or experience powerlessness (Seeman, 1983). Similarly, locus of control is a consistent concern for psychologists (deCharms & Muir, 1978; Deci, 1985). To the extent an individual perceives that their environment is outside their control, their intrinsic motivation will be reduced (Deci, 1985).

***Competency.*** Another factor influencing an individual's self-efficacy is the perceived skill or competence they have to perform a required task or function. The notion of competence and personal mastery has been consistently raised as an important part of human functioning (Bandura, 1991; Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2002; Harter, 1978; White, 1959). People who believe they do not have the requisite skill will be unlikely to demonstrate persistent and sustained energy focusing on a given task because the likelihood of success is perceived to be low.

An individual's perception of their competence is governed by their efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1977). An efficacy expectation is a belief that one can successfully perform a particular action and is therefore a belief about one's competence (Bandura, 1977). Individuals develop their belief about their own competency through three sources: personal standards, social referential comparators, and self-reactive influences (Bandura, 1991). Personal standards are based on how significant persons react to an individual's behavior; through teaching; and through evaluative reactions of others to one's behavior (Bandura, 1991).

***Effectiveness.*** An individual's effectiveness is influenced by their perceptions of how the social environment impacts their ability to achieve certain outcomes. To the extent that an individual believes that a given action will lead to a certain outcome, they will feel more effective (Bandura, 1991). This belief has been categorized as an outcome expectation (Bandura, 1991) and has parallel's to the Expectancy Theory construct of outcome expectancy (Vroom & Deci, 1970). There has been some criticism about the perceived ambiguousness of the distinction between outcome expectation and efficacy expectation (Eastman & Marzillier,

1984). However, from a sociological perspective, the term "system responsiveness" provides a more appropriate label than outcome expectation (Gecas, 1989) and has been used to distinguish between self-perceived competence and a system's responsiveness (Almond & Verba, 1989; Barber, 1983). Therefore, to the extent individuals perceive the social environment will enable them to achieve an outcome expectation the "system" has been responsive.

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The ongoing interest in work motivation theories and employee engagement is being driven by numerous factors including globalization, work/life balance, information technology, new forms of working and the growth in service industries. In a service and information based economy, developing a deeper and broader understanding of the factors that impact employee motivation. From an Australian perspective, the float of the Australian dollar, abandonment of the centralized arbitration system, ongoing reduction in tariffs, privatization of many government enterprises and more robust regulatory environment have all served to intensify competition and stimulate the economy. In turn, this strong economic growth has led to historically high levels of employment and ever increasing competition to attract, motivate and retain good employees.

Yet how well do modern Australian managers understand how to motivate employees? Historically, the centralized nature of Australia's wage fixing system has largely obviated the need for management to focus on understanding the extrinsic needs of employees and develop appropriate reward structures. Further, the relatively closed nature of Australia's economic and industrial system greatly reduced the need for management to understand employee needs and provide appropriate workplace environments. Over the past 20 years, Australian managers have largely relied on international (principally American) research and management practices to foster higher levels of employee motivation and engagement as organizations have adapted to changes in the socio-economic environment. Although many of the concepts used have application in the workplace, Australia's unique workplace heritage and national culture suggest that simply copying overseas models is unlikely to be the most effective means of improving motivation. Given the ongoing international interest in employee motivation and engagement and call for new perspectives to work motivation theories, taking a fresh approach is sensible.

From a historical perspective, using social constructionism practices to create societal norms that institutionalize work motivation for the good of the individual is common. Religious philosophies typically used work as a vehicle to enshrine societal discipline: in the Judeo-Christian tradition, work was punishment for man's original sin; in the Islamic tradition, work was the way to make man pleasing and acceptable to God; in the Buddhist tradition, Nirvana was reached through hard work (MOW International Researc Team, 1987). In contrast, prior to the American industrial revolution, the need to 'motivate' man to work was relatively foreign as profits were effectively shared once goods were sold so workers and the owners of the means of production had a common goal (Jacques, 1996). However, since the introduction of 'salary and wages' to American commerce, work has been characterized as a vehicle for success and salvation (Jacques, 1996) while the quintessentially American life story and culture of work and entrepreneurial drive reinforces the importance of self-redemption (McAdams, 2006). Indeed, the use of psychological techniques to validate work as an intrinsically satisfying experience provides another example of how social constructionism has institutionalized work motivation as a means of governing the soul (Rose, 1999).

From a sociological perspective, although the general theme of action and agency is well established within symbolic interaction theory, the topic of self-efficacy is rarely treated explicitly (Gecas, 1989). To date, research on self-efficacy within sociology has mainly dealt within the broader theme of social structure and culture. As organizations are complex social institutions with sophisticated social structures and diverse cultures, developing a greater understanding of the impact of sociological and anthropological factors such as structure and culture on self-efficacy is crucial. Further, gaining insight into social factors that impact the self-concept is an essential part of assessing self-efficacy's impact on employee motivation. In this regard, symbolic interaction provides a framework for understanding the factors that may enhance an individual's self-efficacy as they move beyond infancy (Gecas, 1989).

From a psychological perspective, most research has been carried out on the consequences of self-efficacy and on its early development (Gecas, 1989). With respect to consequences, a number of studies have reported on the beneficial effects of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Seeman, 1983; Seligman, 2006) from both a physical and mental health point of view. Although there are limitations to the therapeutic consequences of self-efficacy (Gecas, 1989), its application within a work environment would arguably have similar effects. The development of self-efficacy is achieved through sources of efficacy information such as

personal mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977). In this regard, the family context is a primary influence on self-efficacy development. Importantly, it is how we perceive our performance successes that are the key to efficacious children, a finding that is consistent with both symbolic interactionist and psychological frameworks. However, the explicit use of self-efficacy in Australian organizational settings and its impact on employee motivation is not well documented.

Therefore, from a variety of perspectives, research into the impact of self-efficacy principles and practices on work motivation and employee engagement, particularly within Australian organizations is needed. Understanding how individuals develop a sense of agency within an organizational setting as well as reconciling the different views of self are important sociological and psychological issues. The themes of agency, personal control and perceived competence are central to both disciplines and therefore the study of self-efficacy is eminently suited to appraisal within a broad social psychological framework. Both disciplines offer different perspectives and methodologies to interpret the meaning and effect of self-efficacy in practice. In addition, increasing self efficacy has been clearly demonstrated to have a positive impact on individual mental and physical health and well-being. Therefore, studying self-efficacy in the workplace may concurrently yield insights into how individuals can achieve a better work-life balance, help cope with stress and achieve an improved level of self-realisation and perceived control. In effect, organizations introducing self-efficacy principles and practices have the potential of "Doing Well by Doing Good".

**Summary and Hypotheses**

The positive relationship between self-efficacy and work motivation has been clearly established from a theoretical perspective. However, empirical work is needed in the workplace to determine how self perceptions of general self-efficacy affect work motivation and employee engagement. In addition, the extent to which self perceptions of personal agency and control, competency and effectiveness (the specific elements within self-efficacy) are related to work motivation and employee engagement also needs to be investigated in a workplace environment. Besides the relationship between absolute levels of general self-efficacy, personal agency and control, competency and effectiveness, it is critical to understand the impact an intervention designed to improve self-efficacy has on individual perceptions of general self-efficacy, personal agency and control, competency and effectiveness. To the extent that individual perceptions change and a positive relationship between self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement is found, support for self-

efficacy based interventions to improve organizational performance will be reinforced. The proceeding discussion leads to the following hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1a – Individual's with a higher general sense of self-efficacy will have a correspondingly higher level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 1b – Increasing an individual's general sense of self-efficacy will result in an increase in their level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 2a - Individual's with a stronger sense of personal agency will have a correspondingly higher level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 2b - Increasing an individual's sense of personal agency will result in an increase in their level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 3a - Individual's with a perceived higher level of competence will have a correspondingly higher level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 3b - Increasing an individual's perceived level of competence will result in an increase in their level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 4a - Individual's with a higher perceived level of effectiveness will have a correspondingly higher level of work motivation.*

*Hypothesis 4b - Increasing an individual's perceived level of effectiveness will result in an increase in their level of work motivation.*

## PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

### Overview

A key issue when undertaking research on a topic common to two disciplines is developing a methodology that satisfies one without antagonizing the other. In spite of the overarching "social psychology" label both founding disciplines use, their discourse and paradigm are arguably very different. This issue is a long standing one (Britt, 1937).

To determine what impact the meaning of and changes to self-efficacy may have on work motivation and employee engagement, field research will be required. In order to adopt both a sociological and psychological perspective, a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques will be required. The qualitative techniques will enable an inductive and descriptive evaluation of the ways in which employees interpret and ascribe meaning to self-efficacy. The quantitative techniques will provide a statistical measure of self-efficacy and its antecedents. Both techniques will be used to undertake pre and post evaluation of changes to perceptions of self-efficacy as a result of an intervention designed to increase individual self-efficacy in a work setting.

***Host Organizations.*** Three companies from different industries will act as host organizations. An intervention based on improving the customer service skills of individuals working with the host organizations will be designed based on self-efficacy principles and practices. The proposed industries and job types are:

Financial Services (frontline branch and contact centre employees)
Retail (sales/service assistants and cashiers)
Hospitality/Property (food and beverage servers and security officers)

These companies are all considered to be service industries and as a result are reliant on customer service as a key point of differentiation with competitors. As customer service processes are relatively similar across industries, it will be feasible to generalize the results to other industries. Another factor favoring an intervention based on customer service is that it can be independently observed and measured from the customers point of view using techniques such as mystery shopping. While customer service can be viewed as a global attitude, it can also be viewed as a competence to be developed and is therefore an acquirable skill.

These industries have been chosen because they have relatively low skill levels necessary for new entrants. Partially as a result, employee turnover tends to be high and there are significant issues with regards to employee motivation. The job types nominated all involve direct customer interaction but have a variety of face to face vs. separated; transaction vs. sales; and service vs. compliance foci. The nominated companies are all large Australian public companies and have a range of workplace environments. Therefore, from a sociological point of view, having both large and small workplace environments within large organizations will facilitate understanding the effect of structure, bureaucratization, control and culture.

**Stage 1 – Recruit Host Organizations**

Preliminary discussions have been held with a number of potential host organizations. Each host organization would be required to contribute up to $20,000 towards the research, principally to cover the cost of conducting Stage 5 – Customer Service Training Intervention. Host organizations would need to provide access to employees for interviews and quantitative data collection. In addition, host organizations would be responsible for releasing 80 employees for the training sessions for one day.

**Stage 2 – Observational Research**

Up to two weeks will be spent at each organization developing a better understanding of structure, roles, norms, values and any other social factors that may influence behavior. A review of HR material including induction programs, training materials, performance appraisal systems, recruitment and selection procedures and remuneration policies will be undertaken. Attendance and observation of training sessions including an induction program would be made. At the end of the two weeks, a good working knowledge of the organization's culture and social environment will be gained.

**Stage 3 – Employee Interviews**

A minimum of one week will be spent at each organization conducting a minimum of 15 interviews with front line employees relating to self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement. Approximately 10 existing employees with more than 1 years' service and 5 new employees with less than 3 months service will be interviewed. The aim of the interviews is to collect as much qualitative data as possible concerning the environmental factors that have influenced employee perceptions of self-efficacy. Possible questions include:

How do we as individuals form judgments of self?

To what extent do environmental factors determine our view of self?
Are there multiple selves and how do we reconcile these with expectations about work?
How do we form a belief that the self can successfully perform a particular action and that a given action will lead to a certain outcome?

Other factors to be discussed include long-term social ones such as the impact of family, school, peers, institutions, media and other employment on self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement. Employees will also be asked about their perceptions of the level of agency, competence and effectiveness they feel working at their host organization. Finally, employee perceptions of how their employer's induction and on-going training programs have impacted their self-efficacy will be explored.

**Stage 4 – Scale Selection, Modification and/or Development**

The information from Stages 1 and 2 will be collated and key themes and issues identified prior to conducting a review of existing general self-efficacy scales as well as any specific self efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement scales. The review may determine that an existing scale will perform adequately or will provide a solid basis for a revised scale. The final output of this stage will be a new or updated General Self-Efficacy scale and Work Motivation and Employee Engagement subscales.

**Stage 5 – Pre-test of General Self-Efficacy and Work Motivation**

The new instrument will be used to measure General Self-Efficacy, Work Motivation and Employee Engagement within the three host organizations. A target total of 960 surveys (320 per host organization) will be distributed and collected. Half of the surveys (160) will be distributed to 'new' (less than 12 months working at the host organization) and the other half of the surveys (160) will be distributed to existing (more than 12 months service at the host organization. Within each organization, the surveys will be split equally between the two nominated job categories (80 for each). The table below illustrates the number of surveys being distributed to each employee classification.

| | **Financial Service** | **Retail** | **Hospitality** |
|---|---|---|---|
| New – Job Type 1 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| Existing – Job Type 1 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| New – Job Type 2 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| Existing – Job Type 2 | 80 | 80 | 80 |

If possible, participants will be selected on the basis of their store location to facilitate dividing each participant segment into two groups. At a later date, one group will be invited to participate in a training intervention designed to improve an individual's self-efficacy with respect to customer service and its impact on work motivation.

**Stage 6 – Customer Service Training Intervention**

Each cell of the surveyed employees will be split into 2 groups of 40 participants. One group will participate in a customer service training intervention while the other group will have not training and therefore act as a control group. Within each Job Type, two, 1 Day customer service improvement workshops will be held with up to 20 people attending each. The workshops will use one facilitator and two actors to lead participants through a program designed to improve each participant's self-efficacy, particularly in relation to customer service. The focus will be on providing the opportunity for participants to experience each of the four means by which self-efficacy improves: Vicarious learning; personal mastery; verbal persuasion and emotional arousal.

The primary vehicle for enabling participants to improve their self-efficacy is a form of simultaneous dramaturgy known as Forum Theatre created by Augusto Boal. Participants (spectators) will watch a scripted performance by the actors illustrating poor customer service scenarios within the company based on mystery shopping experiences. At the end of each scenario, participants will have the opportunity to point out inappropriate customer service behavior. The actors will then reprise the scripted scenarios but at any point, participants (now referred to as spect-actors) may call out "stop!" and either take the actor's place or coach the actor on the appropriate behavior. Through this process of active participation, spect-actors become empowered to achieve individual, group and even organizational change.

Participants are encouraged to not only imagine the required change but are actually given the opportunity to practice it. In effect, participants experience all 4 forms of improved self-efficacy through learning vicariously, practicing personal mastery, receiving verbal coaching and experiencing heightened emotional arousal throughout the performance.

At the end of each workshop, participants should, at a minimum, judge they are more competent than before with respect to customer service. The ability to exert personal agency and perceive one is effective in the workplace will be somewhat contingent on the environment at each host organization. To the extent that the workplace environment, both at a local level and across the host organization, supports the individual in practicing their refined customer service skills, the more the participant will feel they have personal agency to have impact.

**Stage 7 – Post-test of General Self-Efficacy and Work Motivation**

Approximately 3 months after the customer service training initiative, all previous respondents will be sent the General Self Efficacy, Work Motivation and Employee Engagement instrument to complete a second time. The results will then be compared with the previous survey to see what change, if any, has occurred in participant's sense of self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement. The results for participants in the customer service training intervention will also be compared to what change, if any, has occurred in the control group in order to account for any global or organization wide changes that may have occurred.

**Stage 8 – Data Analysis**

The pre and post-test sets of data will be compared across the entire participant population as well as between organizations. These comparisons will highlight what, if any, general changes have resulted in participant self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement as well as between organizations. In addition, intra-organization comparisons will be conducted between the two different job categories. Similarly, job categories across all 3 host organizations will also be compared to determine to what extent the nature of individual jobs may have impacted self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement. The findings from the earlier qualitative research will be reviewed in light of the quantitative information to illuminate possible reasons for differences.

**Conclusion**

The research program outlined has the potential to make a contribution in a number of ways. First, by adopting elements of a sociological approach to work motivation, it is an attempt to meet the call to introduce new perspectives to the field's theoretical development. In particular, the focus on self-efficacy and the underlying concept of human agency embodied within it recognized by both the sociology and psychology disciplines provides elements of a common discourse that recognizes both the social nature of organizations and individual's that work within them.

Second, the focus on self-efficacy provides a new way for management to think about work motivation and employee engagement. Rather than the traditional use of extrinsic and intrinsic incentives, a focus on helping people to develop a greater sense of self-efficacy through increased perceived control, competence and effectiveness will help to frame the way in which managers think about employee motivation.

**Appendix III – MGSM Working Paper 2008 – 8**

*MACQUARIE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT*

## MGSM WORKING PAPERS IN MANAGEMENT

# IMPROVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE: A SELF-EFFICACY BASED INTERVENTION

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**MGSM WP 2008 - 8**
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# IMPROVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE: A SELF-EFFICACY BASED INTERVENTION

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## Abstract

Self-efficacy is a social psychological construct that is conceptualized from an agentic perspective. It refers to people's beliefs about their capabilities to perform designated tasks. Numerous studies have shown a strong positive relationship between an individual's self-efficacy and their performance. However, there is a paucity of studies examining the longitudinal effect of self-efficacy-based interventions, their impact on self-efficacy and subsequent individual and organizational performance. This paper reports on the results of a field experiment conducted within an Australasian financial services organization that assessed the effect of an intervention on participants' self-efficacy and customer service skills. Two sets of workshops were designed and delivered using Forum Theatre, a technique traditionally used as a catalyst for political action amongst oppressed groups, as the principle vehicle to increase employee self efficacy. A specifically-designed measure of employee self-efficacy and a range of workplace customer service measures were used for evaluation purposes. Preliminary results indicate a positive change in customer service, in part due to enhanced self-efficacy.

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## INTRODUCTION

What motivates people to work effectively? The current high level of interest in employee engagement (Saks, 2006) highlights management's preoccupation with this question. Academically, the topic of work motivation is one of the most investigated topics within organizational behavior research (Locke & Latham, 2004; Steers et al., 2004). A consistent finding to emerge from this literature is the importance of self-efficacy in motivating better performance.

Self-efficacy refers to people's judgment in their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands (Bandura, 1986). It has been identified as a key motivational force within organizations (Gist & Mitchell, 1992) and is a core component of Locke and Latham's (2004) model of work motivation. Within sociology, Marx (1844) viewed human nature as a process of self-creation through efficacious action in the context of work (Gecas, 1991). Indeed, a key feature of Marx's concept of alienation is powerlessness - or a lack of self-efficacy.

There is a great deal of evidence regarding the importance of self-efficacy for performance. Stajkovic & Luthans (1997), for example, found in a meta-analysis that self-efficacy based interventions are associated with a 28% performance improvement, which is at least double the effect size of related interventions like goal setting. Self-efficacy motivates better performance in several ways (Bandura, 1986, 1991). For example, people who believe they do not have the requisite skill will be unlikely to demonstrate persistence on a given task because the likelihood of success is perceived to be low.

The importance of the concept of self-efficacy is such that, in recent times, it has been identified as a core component of several higher-order motivational concepts, including empowerment (Spreitzer, 1996), core confidence (Stajkovic, 2006) and positive psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2007). These higher-order motivational states are proposed to be important in generating outcomes such as performance, subjective well-being, and job satisfaction. Self-efficacy is also increasingly recognised as a determinant of employee engagement (Christian & Slaughter, 2007).

Nevertheless, despite a great deal of attention to the concept of self-efficacy, several limitations of this research have been noted. There are very few longitudinal studies showing the effects of organizationally-based interventions for enhancing self-efficacy and performance. On the whole, experimental designs have been set in classrooms rather than organizational settings; simulated rather than work-related tasks have been used; students are the main participants instead of employees; training outcomes have been measured rather than job performance; and very few studies have been longitudinal (Saks, 1995a). More empirical work is needed to investigate the link between self-efficacy, work motivation, and job performance within organizational settings, especially longitudinally. In particular, it is important to investigate how self-efficacy can be enhanced within organizational settings.

The purpose of this research was to test the relationships between self-efficacy, work motivation and engagement on a longitudinal basis in an organizational setting. Specifically, we investigate the effect of an intervention designed to enhance employees' self-efficacy for customer service, with a primary focus on having proactive customer conversations and on subsequent customer interactions.

The intervention involved workshops designed to enhance employee self-efficacy with respect to proactive customer conversations. The workshops used a technique called Forum Theatre (or Theatre of the Oppressed) (Boal, 2000); a form of simultaneous dramaturgy where participants (spect-actors) watch a scripted performance illustrating proactive customer conversation issues. We expected the workshop to enhance the four principal sources of self-efficacy information (Bandura, 1997): enactive mastery experiences; vicarious experiences; verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences; and physiological and affective states. Vicarious experiences are likely to occur because participants watched actors demonstrate both how and how not to have effective customer conversations, and how to deal with setbacks. Enactive mastery is likely to occur because participants were involved in personal action planning and role playing. Verbal persuasion is likely to be because the facilitator encouraged participants to believe they could learn to be effective. Finally, physiological and affective states were enhanced due to the 'live' environment the workshops were conducted.

In combination, we proposed that the intervention would enhance employees' self-efficacy through multiple mechanisms, and thereby increase their performance.

METHODOLOGY

## Organization and study design

A large Australasian financial services organization agreed to sponsor the research. This organization had identified a business performance issue (making appointments with customers to review their finances) where traditional workplace interventions had failed. The proposed intervention, focusing on building employees' self-efficacy for proactive customer conversations, was seen to be a suitable approach.

Twenty branches from a large city in Eastern Australia were selected to participate in the field experiment. These mid-sized branches were classified as "second tier' within the organization and typically had 6 employees: Manager (1); Supervisor (1); and Frontline (4). These branches were split in half using geographic and customer demographic criteria to create two equivalent groups. The experimental half participated in a self-efficacy based intervention while the other half served as a control group. Another 12 large 'first tier' outlets served as a further comparison as they had recently completed a different training initiative to address the business performance issue.

Employees from the experimental group participated in 2 half day workshops (4 weeks apart), as described above. In order to support employees back in the workplace, 3 short (6 minute) DVD's were produced and shown over 3 weeks featuring the bank employee characters created during the workshop series. The DVD's continued the characters' journeys and were designed to maintain/increase employee self-efficacy.

Respondents completed a survey before and immediately after the workshop. A final set of questionnaires will be administered to the experimental and control groups one month after the DVD series are completed (6 months after 1$^{st}$ workshop).

## Measures

Six employees from different job categories were interviewed to develop a deeper understanding of the issues affecting employees in making appointments with customers. This interview data was used to develop a measure of self-efficacy for proactive customer conversations according to Bandura's guidelines. Employees were asked to rate how certain they were that they could do each of a series of tasks. They indicated their degree of confidence on a scale of 0-100 in 10 point intervals. Example items included: starting a meaningful conversation with a customer during a routine transaction; asking a customer an open-ended question; and making recommendations based on a customer's specific needs. The survey also had items relating to potential moderators and mediators of the relationship between self efficacy, motivation and performance.

A range of customer service related factors were measured using self-perceptions of performance. In order to measure behavioural changes, a mystery shopping program was introduced. Evidence from a range of studies all suggest mystery shoppers provide reasonably reliable rating of the performance of retail outlets (Finn & Kayande, 1999) Finally, monthly appointment making data was gathered for a 2 year period for control, experimental and key branch groups.

**Sample**

There were 109 respondents (61 Experimental and 48 Control). The overall response rate was approximately 85% (95% Experimental and 75% Control).

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The intervention has been completed, two surveys have been administered, and considerable organizational customer service data has been collected.

Anecdotal evidence suggests the workshops were very successful. Participant evaluation forms were highly enthusiastic about the difference the workshops had made with respect to their degree of confidence in having proactive customer conversations. Examples of feedback from participants included: "Trust and believe in myself more"; "Will start one on one role plays with staff to each gain confidence"; "The role plays were a highlight – being taken out of my comfort zone but being able to deliver." In addition, a midpoint telephone conversation

with Branch Managers from the experimental group also suggests that the immediate post workshop feedback had been sustained. Three quotes from branch staff serve to illustrate the intervention's impact: "More confident in what they're doing"; "Doing more on their own and being proactive"; "Different outlook on things and breaking habitual patterns of behaviour".

Importantly, mystery shopping results across all branches suggest the intervention has made a significant difference to performance. The changes in scores before and after the intervention show that mystery shopping scores for both the Tier 1 comparison outlets and the control group had decreased (51% to 45% and 45% to 28% respectively) while the scores for the experimental (intervention) group had increased (37% to 45%). Another mystery shopping round will be conducted at the end of the study period.

Consistent with the mystery shopping results, the number of appointments being made has increased significantly for the experimental group. As an example, one branch reported 98% of the appointment target was achieved during the month when the first workshop was held compared to 48% in the 12 months previous. Comparative data for the control groups is currently being analysed.

In summary, preliminary findings support the effects of the intervention in enhancing organizational performance. More systematic analyses are now being conducted to ascertain whether self-efficacy is one of the mechanisms that explain this enhanced performance. These analyses will additionally draw on follow-up data that is currently being collected. Time series analyses of the customer service data will be conducted to track the changes over time more systematically.

# Appendix V – Report to Bank M

**Self-Efficacy Research Project – December 30, 2008**

Introduction

This is the final report on the Self-Efficacy research project and is a follow up to the Project Review dated February 18, 2008.

Overview

Three groups of 11 to 12 participants (BM's, PB's and SSA/CSM's) from 2 Victorian LAM's (Northern Suburbs and Melbourne Outer North) attended a 1 day workshop in late October 2007. The workshop was designed to (1) Increase employee confidence in their competence to undertake difficult tasks; and (2) Put G2C and ENABLE into practice by helping employees practice the 'how'. Specifically, there was a focus on addressing the gaps identified in Mystery Shopping namely: demonstrating desire for the business, follow up and asking for the business. A second half day workshop was held in early December 2007 with 3 groups of 6 participants (half of the original participants did not attend). The second workshop was designed to reinforce the learning from the first workshop and deepen participant's confidence. However, the reduced numbers and circumstances were likely to have an adverse impact on the program's objectives.

The preliminary project review showed there had been a significant and positive impact on participant attitudes. In addition, there were early indications that attendee behaviour and performance were improving but more data needed to be collected to confirm whether these trends were maintained over time. The final report incorporates 2 months of additional sales data and one more Service Excellence snapshot in order to assess the longer term impact of the workshops. At a branch level (the only information that is available for analysis), the data does not show any significant difference in behaviour or performance as a result of the workshops. Therefore, although there may be individual differences in behaviour or performance as suggested by anecdotal and attitudinal data, the results do not reflect any impact at a branch level.

Project Evaluation Summary

1. Anecdotal Feedback

The preliminary report provided selected comments from workshop participants. These comments were very favourable about the impact of the workshops on participant confidence in their ability to practice the G2C and ENABLE behaviours. Follow up telephone interviews also suggested that at least some participants had changed their approach and were seeing positive results. One branch manager commented that she had completely changed her approach from doing everything herself (old management model) to doing everything through her team (new leadership model). A personal banker commented that instead of continuing to talk whenever customers fell silent during sales conversations he took their silence to be an indication that customers were seriously considering making a purchase and therefore remained silent too. Overall, there is evidence that at least some participants changed their behaviour through the workshops.

2. Survey Feedback

A final survey measuring both respondent self-efficacy and a range of attitudinal variables was carried out in May 2008. Respondent self-efficacy data used a modified format to the one collected prior to (October 2007) and immediately after (December 2007) the workshops. The modified format was designed to capture long term changes in self-efficacy for the experimental group compared to the control group. The attitudinal variables were compared to those originally collected prior to the first workshop to see whether there were any noticeable changes. The limited numbers of respondents has made it difficult to determine any major impact of the intervention or provide guidance to NAB. However, key points are highlighted below:

Self-Efficacy Scores (Oct 07, Dec 07 and May 08)

In spite of the low number of participants in the second set of workshops, the preliminary report showed that there was a statistically significant change in **3** of the areas of focus (*Asking for the Business, Developmental Coaching and Building the Team*). In addition, **2** other areas of focus (*Building Rapport and Observational Coaching*) were very close to having changed on a positive statistically significant basis while **3** other areas of focus (*Overcoming Concerns, Follow Up and Results Coaching*) showed a positive trend. The results suggest the workshops lifted participant Self-Efficacy (their confidence in their competence to undertake specific work-related tasks) for managers.

It is difficult to compare the results from the pre-intervention survey in Oct 07 with the final survey in May 08 because of the limited number of respondents (Only 8 Managers and 9 SSA/CSM/PB's vs. a total of 59 original respondents). The pre-intervention survey showed there was no statistically significant difference between the Pilot and Control groups across the full set of self-efficacy measures (both customer and employee ones). The final survey shows there is still no statistically significant difference between the 2 Groups (albeit on very small numbers). Therefore, it is not feasible to tell whether or not the workshops had any long-term positive impact on participant self-efficacy.

Attitude Scores (Oct 07 vs. May 08)

On a number of the attitude measures, there was some evidence that the intervention had a positive impact on workshop participants. However, due to the overall low number of respondents at the post (May 2008) survey, the change in scores is not statistically significant. For example, self-esteem and life satisfaction both increased substantially for workshop participants from the pre to the post survey while job stress decreased. Importantly, Flexible Role Orientation (both Customer Service and Performance) increased for workshop respondents compared to the control group. While these score changes suggest the workshops had a positive impact on participants, the small number of respondents means the result is only indicative and not conclusive.

Appendix 1 contains a fuller description of the attitude measures including mean scores and commentary.

3. Service Experience – Behaviour

Data from 3 time periods (October 07, December 07, March 08) was compared for all branches participating in the study. As noted in the preliminary report, there are significant gaps in the data collected, particularly for the October 07 time period which may bring into question the validity of the data for analysis purposes. Nevertheless, 5 key measures were compared for 3 reporting periods that compared the Experimental and Control Groups. This data is presented in the table below.

**Table 1 – Service Experience**

| | | Control | Experimental |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall** | Oct-07 | 77 | 79 |
| **Satisfaction %** | Dec-07 | 81 | 81 |
| | Mar-08 | 83 | 81 |
| | | | |
| **Advocacy** | Oct-07 | -16 | -9 |
| **Net Promoter** | Dec-07 | -2 | 4 |
| | Mar-08 | 1 | -6 |
| | | | |
| **Loyalty** | Oct-07 | 25 | 30 |
| **Extremely Satisfied %** | Dec-07 | 29 | 30 |
| | Mar-08 | 34 | 31 |
| | | | |
| **Customer** | Oct-07 | 13 | 22 |
| **Expectations** | Dec-07 | 27 | 21 |
| **Exceeded %** | Mar-08 | 27 | 22 |
| | | | |
| **Customer** | Oct-07 | 14 | 16 |
| **Expectations** | Dec-07 | 10 | 10 |
| **Not Met %** | Mar-08 | 7 | 9 |

1. Overall Satisfaction – There is a small upward trend for the Control Group whereas the Experimental Group has stayed the same for the last 2 reporting periods. However, the difference between them is fairly small.
2. Advocacy (Net Promoter) – The Control Group has continued to improve their score whereas the Experimental Group initially improved a similar amount but has fallen back in March.
3. Loyalty (Percentage Satisfied %) – There has been a steady increase in the % of Customers who are extremely satisfied in the Control Group whereas the Experimental Group has remained static.
4. Customer Expectations Exceeded – The Control Group's score jumped initially and is higher than the Experimental Group's score.
5. Customer Expectations Not Met – Both Groups scores have consistently fallen.

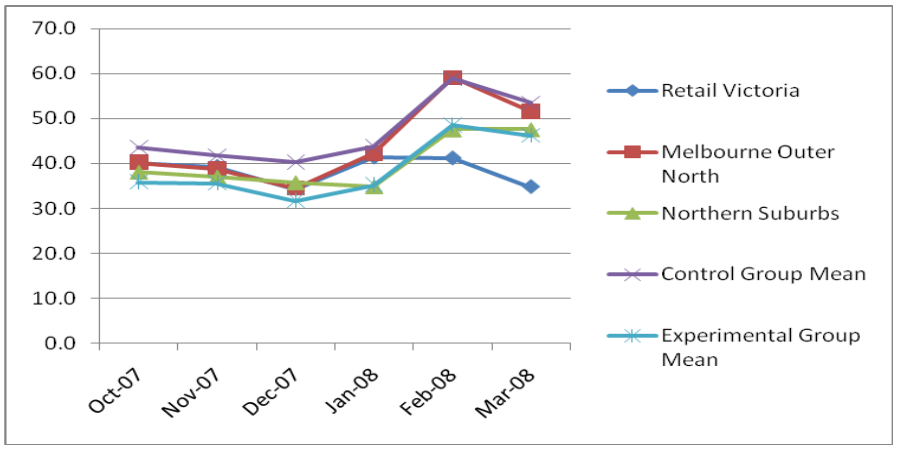
On all 5 measures, the Control Group initially scored lower than the Experimental Group but is now scoring higher. As it is unlikely that the workshops would have had an adverse impact on customer related metrics, the trends are more likely to be a result of other factors or simply

a reflection of the data gaps pointed out earlier. For example, it may be that Control Group branches received more management attention given their lower initial scores. In any event, the workshops do not appear to have had a positive impact on the Customer Service Experience.

4. Unit Sales per Sales FTE - Performance

Data was analysed for the 4 month period from October 07 through March 08 for all Victorian Regions and branches from the 2 LAM's. All branch results were modified to account for mobile bankers and casuals in order to facilitate comparison with regional and state means.

**Table 2 – Sales Trend Overview**




| Region | Oct-07 | Nov-07 | Dec-07 | Jan-08 | Feb-08 | Mar-08 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Retail Victoria | 40.2 | 39.3 | 34.3 | 41.4 | 41.2 | 34.8 |
| Melbourne Outer North | 40.2 | 38.8 | 34.5 | 42.2 | 59.1 | 51.6 |
| Northern Suburbs | 38.1 | 37.0 | 35.7 | 34.8 | 47.6 | 47.6 |
| Control Group Mean | 43.5 | 41.8 | 40.3 | 43.8 | 59.0 | 53.5 |
| Experimental Group Mean | 35.9 | 35.6 | 31.7 | 35.2 | 48.5 | 46.2 |

*Data for Feb 08 and March 08 is weekly multiplied by 4.

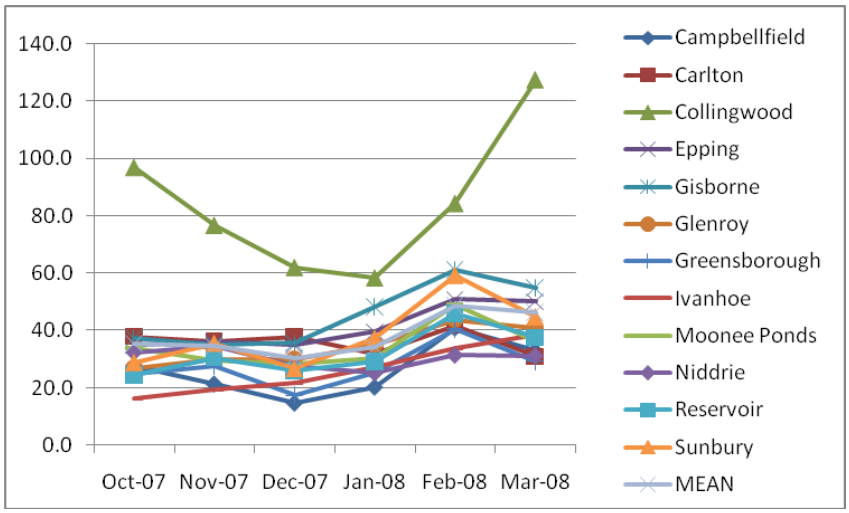
The chart shows there has been a significant increase for Unit Sales per Sales FTE for the 2 LAM's in Feb and March 08 so that now both are well above the Retail Victoria average (N.B. Branches from the former Northern Suburbs LAM were grouped together for the analysis). In addition, the Experimental Group mean has increased in March compared to the Control Group whereas in the previous 4 months, they tracked in line with each other.

Although it is possible that the increase in Unit Sales per Sales FTE is a reflection of the workshops, two other explanations appear more plausible. First of all, the February and March figures may not have taken account of mobile bankers and casuals as this data was collected at a different time than the first 4 months of data. As a result, the numbers may be overstated. Secondly, the relative increase in the Experimental Group in March appears to be a direct reflection of the increased activity at the Collingwood branch as the University year started. When Collingwood is excluded from the analysis, the trend lines for the Experimental and Control Groups remain parallel. Therefore it appears that there has been no impact on Unit Sales per Sales FTE as a result of the workshops.

The individual branch data for the Experimental and Control Groups supports the suggestions that Mobile Banker/Casual data overstates the previous monthly Unit Sales per Sales FTE. In

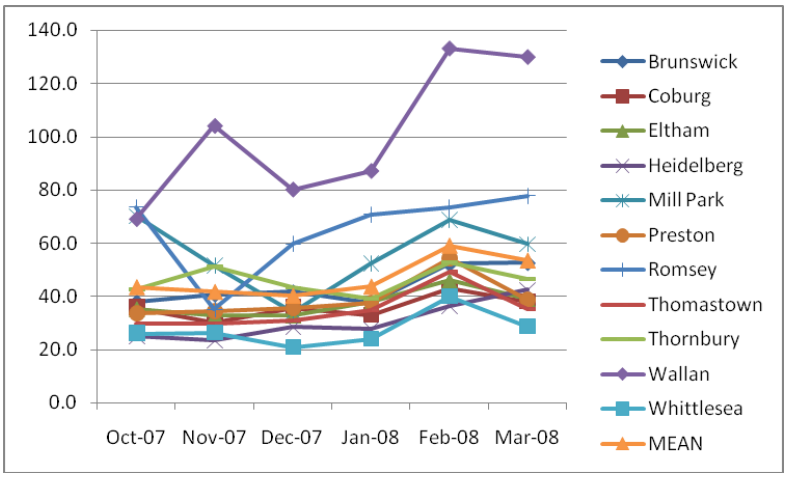
addition, the Collingwood branch's performance clearly distorts the overall averages and results for the Experimental Group.

**Table 3 – Sales Trend – Experimental Group**




| Region | Oct-07 | Nov-07 | Dec-07 | Jan-08 | Feb-08 | Mar-08 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Campbellfield | 27.6 | 21.3 | 14.6 | 20.2 | 40.8 | 32.8 |
| Carlton | 37.8 | 36.1 | 37.8 | 31.7 | 41.8 | 30.9 |
| Collingwood | 96.9 | 76.8 | 62.2 | 58.5 | 84.4 | 127.4 |
| Epping | 35.0 | 35.9 | 34.8 | 39.5 | 50.8 | 50.0 |
| Gisborne | 37.6 | 35.1 | 35.7 | 48.3 | 61.2 | 54.8 |
| Glenroy | 26.9 | 30.1 | 30.0 | 35.2 | 43.7 | 40.9 |
| Greensborough | 24.9 | 27.6 | 17.5 | 25.2 | 40.4 | 29.2 |
| Ivanhoe | 16.3 | 19.4 | 21.7 | 27.1 | 33.8 | 38.4 |
| Moonee Ponds | 33.6 | 29.6 | 28.3 | 30.2 | 48.9 | 36.1 |
| Niddrie | 32.5 | 34.8 | 27.8 | 25.3 | 31.5 | 31.3 |
| Reservoir | 24.5 | 30.5 | 25.9 | 29.1 | 46.0 | 37.6 |
| Sunbury | 29.0 | 35.6 | 26.9 | 37.4 | 59.2 | 44.8 |
| MEAN | 35.2 | 34.4 | 30.3 | 34.0 | 48.5 | 46.2 |

**Table 4 – Sales Trend – Control Group**



| Region | Oct-07 | Nov-07 | Dec-07 | Jan-08 | Feb-08 | Mar-08 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brunswick | 37.8 | 40.6 | 41.5 | 37.4 | 52.2 | 52.6 |
| Coburg | 35.9 | 30.3 | 35.9 | 33.0 | 43.1 | 38.0 |
| Eltham | 35.2 | 32.8 | 32.7 | 37.7 | 46.0 | 38.8 |
| Heidelberg | 25.0 | 23.4 | 28.5 | 27.6 | 36.5 | 42.5 |
| Mill Park | 70.2 | 51.6 | 34.2 | 52.3 | 68.8 | 59.6 |
| Preston | 33.7 | 34.6 | 35.8 | 37.8 | 54.5 | 38.9 |
| Romsey | 73.5 | 35.3 | 59.7 | 70.7 | 73.2 | 77.6 |
| Thomastown | 29.8 | 29.6 | 30.8 | 34.9 | 49.2 | 35.2 |
| Thornbury | 42.7 | 51.2 | 43.1 | 39.0 | 52.8 | 46.5 |
| Wallan | 69.0 | 104.1 | 80.1 | 87.1 | 133.2 | 130.0 |
| Whittlesea | 26.2 | 26.2 | 20.9 | 24.0 | 40.0 | 28.8 |
| MEAN | 43.5 | 41.8 | 40.3 | 43.8 | 59.0 | 53.5 |

## Conclusion

This data presented in this review indicate that the immediate objective of increasing employee confidence in key work-related task areas has been achieved. Based on the available Service Experience and Unit Sales data, there is no support for the hypothesis that increasing employee confidence results in improved performance. However, a key limitation of the data is that it is collected and analysed at an aggregated (branch) rather than at the individual (employee) level. Given the relatively low attendance at the second workshop and the impact of non-workshop attendees on overall branch performance, it is impossible to accurately judge the impact of the workshops on individual behaviour and performance. In summary, although the workshops had the desired impact on employee confidence, this increase did not translate into improved behaviour and performance.

## Appendix – Attitude Measures and Scores as of May 2008

Non-Controlling Supervision – Mean 5.0/7

Respondents somewhat agreed that they weren't overly controlled by supervisors. No real change between surveys.

Job Stress – Mean 3.7/7

Respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that they were stressed by their jobs. Overall the experimental group was less stressed by their jobs on the second survey but the decrease was not statistically significant.

Time Pressure – Mean 5.3/7

Respondents somewhat agreed that they don't have time to do their jobs. No real change between surveys.

Organisation Support – Mean 4.7/7

Respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that NAB shows support for them with virtually no change between surveys.

Self-Esteem – Mean – 5.9/7

Respondents agreed they have good levels of self-esteem. The average score for the experimental group rose substantially (1 point) between surveys but it was not sufficient to be statistically significant because of the low number of respondents.

General Self-Efficacy – Mean 5.7/7

Respondents agreed they have pretty good levels of general self-efficacy with virtually no change between surveys.

Life Satisfaction – Mean 5.2/7

Respondents somewhat agreed they are satisfied with life with the average score for the experimental group rising by nearly half a point between surveys but it was not sufficient to be statistically significant because of the low number of respondents.

Locus of Control – Mean 5.2/7

Respondents somewhat agreed they have control over their lives with virtually no change between surveys.

Flexible Customer Service Role Orientation – Mean 4.3/5

Respondents generally saw customers as their concern. Although not statistically significant, the experimental group's score improved relative to the control group on the second survey.

Flexible Role Orientation Performance – Mean 3 .3/5

Respondents generally saw customers as their concern. Although not statistically significant, the experimental group's score improved relative to the control group.

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# Part 2 - Employee engagement related Appendices

## Appendix VI – Invited Symposium Paper

***Presented to both the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology and European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology Conferences in 2009***

Increasing Employee Engagement and Performance: A Self-Efficacy Based Intervention.

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Employee engagement is commonly described as putting forth "discretionary effort" defined as extra time, brainpower or energy (Towers-Perrin, 2003a). It is seen as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The notion of capturing discretionary effort is clearly related to the broader work motivation literature where energy and effort are important components (Hunt, 1992; Pinder, 1998b). Therefore, the recent interest in employee engagement as a measure of discretionary effort is firmly grounded within the work motivation field.

Viewed through this wider lens, constructs such as self-efficacy provide insight into the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's beliefs about their ability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997). It has been found to have a substantial impact on work-related performance compared to other interventions (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), implying it has an explicit role in and influence on employee engagement.

It is therefore surprising that with one exception (Luthans, 2002) there is a dearth of field studies examining the employee engagement/self-efficacy relationship. This omission is more perplexing given that research on job burnout has shown that employee engagement

(characterized by energy, involvement and efficacy) is the direct opposite of the three job burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy (Maslach, 2001). Paradoxically, self-efficacy was found to be the only psychological construct to warrant meta-analysis of the role of individual belief states, personality, mood, or emotional states as antecedents to engagement (Christian & Slaughter, 2007). This meta-analysis (n=13) found mean corrected correlations for self-efficacy and the 3 engagement dimensions of vigor, dedication and absorption ranging from .71 to .76, strong evidence of self-efficacy's relationship to employee engagement.

In the present study, we investigated the effect of two half day training interventions employing Forum Theatre and Rehearse for Reality, two techniques that embody cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) principles. In addition, a variation of Entertainment Education (E-E) was introduced. All three interventions were designed to enhance employee self-efficacy with respect to proactive customer conversations and subsequent customer interactions. Forum Theatre (Boal, 2000) is a form of simultaneous dramaturgy where participants watch a scripted performance. Rehearse for Reality is a variation of role playing where participants enter a dyadic role play with a trained actor while other participants watch. The variation of E-E (Singhal, 2004) involved participants watching 3 short DVD's.

In our intervention, Forum Theatre demonstrated proactive customer conversation issues, Rehearse for Reality gave participants practice at having proactive customer conversations and E-E served to reinforce participant behavioral change. We expected the intervention's use of the four principal sources of self-efficacy information (Bandura, 1997) to enhance employee engagement, in part through the increase in self-efficacy. We assessed key variables before the intervention and 185 days after the intervention (N = 29) as well as a comparison group of similar employees from the same organization who did not receive the intervention (N = 24). We also collected performance data in the form of mystery shopping results, number of appointments being made and sales.

Results were analyzed for employees who completed the self-efficacy survey component pre and post intervention (N=66). Out of the ten self-efficacy items, five were expected to show a significant positive difference between the pilot and control group as a result of the intervention. This result was confirmed. With respect to the results for the employee engagement survey, all employees showed a significant decline in dedication, which we attributed to a merger that was announced shortly before the post intervention survey. However, only the control employees showed a significant decline in absorption and vigor, whereas the pilot employee's scores in these types of engagement did not significantly decline. There was also preliminary evidence that self-efficacy mediated the employee engagement scores, particularly with respect to the dedication and absorption sub-scales. Performance data in the form of mystery shopping scores showed the pilot group performed significantly better after the intervention compared to the control group. Finally, preliminary analysis of monthly employee performance (number of appointments being made and sales) showed a clear increase in the pilot group's results relative to the control group.

Additional analysis will be performed to fully investigate mediation and extend the performance analysis to 12 months. Overall, the results suggest the intervention had a positive effect on self-efficacy and performance, and buffered employees against a general decline in engagement, an important finding for practitioners.

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Pages 353-363 of this thesis have been removed as they contain published material. Please refer to the following citation for details of the article contained in these pages.

Carter, R., Joy, M., & Nesbit, P. 2010. Using theatre-based interventions to increase employee self-efficacy and engagement. In S. L. Albrecht (Ed.), ***Handbook of employee engagement : perspectives, issues, research and practice***: 416-424. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Pub.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849806374.00045

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# Part 3 – Power & politics in organisations related Appendix

## Appendix VIII – Conference Paper Submission

*European Group of Organizational Studies 2011 Conference*

## *Empowerment or Control: A Longitudinal Experimental Field Study of the Effects of Organization Theatre*

### Background

From paternalistic philanthropic industrial visionaries, through organization development (OD) movements, to more recent 'strong culture', 'soft' human resource management (HRM) and 'be yourself' programs encouraging employee authenticity and fun (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Fleming, 2009; Legge, 1995; Parker, 2000a, 2002), cultural change initiatives continue to reappear in successive waves of corporate reorganization (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Collinson, 1992; Kunda, 1992; Ramsay, 1977; Sturdy et al., 2003). Such initiatives are inherently contentious, raising as they do positive romantic images of self-expression and re-establishment of community (Peters & Waterman, 1982) as well as negative authoritarian images of intellectual and emotional incarceration in 'total' institutions (Casey, 1995; Ezzamel et al., 2001). One cultural change initiative that has gained popularity in recent years is organization theatres (OT) (Clark & Mangham, 2004b; Darsø, 2004; Larsen, 2005; Meisiek, 2002, 2004; Nissley et al., 2004; Schreyögg, 2001; Taylor, 2008; Teichmann, 2001; Westwood, 2004). In both its *aims* and *methods*, OT's aspirations are strongly aligned with those of normative cultural change programs.

OT involves commissioned, tailor-made plays professionally staged for a defined audience that is dramatized in the performance (Schreyögg, 2001). One of OT's most prominent strands is Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed' (Boal, 1979, 2000) that stimulates reflection, dialogue and action on barriers to personal, organization and social development (Meisiek, 2004; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Nissley et al., 2004). The purpose

of OT is to create an aesthetic space that allows participants to surface and address conditions that have rendered them powerless to effectively handle the issues concerning them. This aesthetic space stimulates discussion and action using theatrical methods that involves the audience as *spect-actors* through acting, scripting and re-scripting dramatic representations of the issues and situations they confront at work. The style and flavor of OT, with its emphasis on personal development, authenticity and fun, accords strongly with the contemporary spread of commercialized initiatives to 'be yourself' in the service of corporate objectives (Fleming, 2009). However, these initiatives operate as part of the complex new systems of 'soft control' to engineer the type of corporate culture and employee identification required to cope with the rapidly changing environment faced by late modern organizations (Fleming, 2009).

Despite considerable discussion and debate over the nature and purported effects of OT, rigorous evaluations of its impact are scarce. Typically, reviews are based on observation and interviews and no quantitative evidence is provided. As a result, generalizations are often presented about 'the' effects or potential of OT, with insufficient deliberation on the type of intervention being considered and a detailed evaluation of actual effects. Even where there has been a systematic, mixed-methods attempt to assess the impact of OT using interviews, videos and surveys (e.g. Meisiek et al (2007), it remains far from being an in-depth field study. The purpose of the paper is to explore the main claims being made about OT and its effects through a theoretically informed and rigorous evaluation of one specific field experiment.

## 2. The Field Study and Operationalization of Empowerment and Soft Control

In 2004, a financial services organization implemented a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to strengthen customer relationships. Branch employees were encouraged to use the CRM system to identify eligible customers for an informative financial 'profiling' appointment. The employee's main task was to proactively ask the customer during the course of a regular transaction to attend an appointment. However, the targeted number of appointments was not being met and the cultural reticence and lack of self-efficacy beliefs amongst branch employees to ask customers to attend a profiling appointment were pinpointed as factors. To address this issue, the company sponsored an OT intervention for 20 'mid-sized' branches. The OT intervention was specifically designed to increase

participants' self-efficacy beliefs to initiate proactive conversations with customers and ask them to attend a profiling appointment. Geographic and demographic criteria were used to assign matched pairs of branches to either a 'Pilot' (intervention) or 'Control' (no intervention) group. Participants included employees from three job categories: Branch Managers (10), Supervisor (10), and Customer Service Officers (CSO) (40).

The first part of the OT intervention involved a Forum Theatre based workshop where participants were presented four scenes that narrated the story of a normal working day in the life of three branch employees. Following the scenes and discussions, time was allocated for structured reflection and the development of goal-oriented, personal action plans. One month after the first workshop, a second workshop was built around an intensive role play process labeled 'Rehearse for Reality' that gave participants the opportunity to practice proactive customer conversations. Participants were divided into smaller groups where they had the opportunity to engage in customer-profiling scenarios with an actor/facilitator playing a customer and the participant playing her or his self. The final stage of the intervention used 'Entertainment Education' (E-E) as a positive reinforcement mechanism until the new behaviors became habitual. The consultants created a three part DVD series incorporating E-E principles that were played at the start of a regular team meeting over three weeks.

In order to measure its effects, both the pilot and control groups completed online surveys before and after the OT intervention. The first survey was conducted just prior to the OT intervention and the second three months after the OT intervention finished (total elapsed time of eight months). Altogether 56 employees completed both the pre (Time 1) and post (Time 2) surveys. The Time 1 survey contained two parts: Part A was part of a larger survey assessing a range of employee traits, perceptions and attitudes. Part B was primarily a smaller, repeated measures version of the Part A survey with additional self-efficacy items. There was no statistical difference between the pilot and control group respondents with respect to their employment conditions (full or part time), job classification (Manager, Supervisor or CSO) or tenure.

### 2.3 Measures of Empowerment

The degree to which the OT intervention changed participant's task self-efficacy beliefs and improved performance was taken as an indicator of *low-level* achievement in the overcoming of powerlessness. *Higher-levels* of empowerment were examined by exploring the degree to

which more generalized self-confidence and belief in ability to influence outcomes beyond the narrower tasks within the job increased. This change was by measuring participants' general self-efficacy (GSE), self-esteem and locus of control. GSE refers to an individual's perception of their ability to perform across a variety of different situations; self-esteem refers to an individuals' degree of liking or disliking for themselves; locus of control refers to the degree to which persons expect that a reinforcement/outcome of their behavior is contingent on their own behavior/personal characteristics versus the degree to which persons expect that the reinforcement/outcome of their behavior is a function of chance, luck or fate.

## 2.3 Measures of Soft Control

The effects of the OT intervention in enhancing *low levels* of additional soft control were measured by exploring the degree to which disciplinary controls were accompanied by a comparative increase in levels of performance achieved (appointments made) and job absorption. Absorption refers to being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

The first measure of *higher levels* of soft control was personal control (emotional labor) and was measured in three ways: deep acting; perspective taking; and exhaustion. In deep acting, employees attempt to modify their felt emotions so that a genuine, organizationally desired emotional display can follow (Grandey, 2003; Groth et al., 2009). In perspective taking, employees are required to think about how they would feel in the customers' situation (Axtell et al., 2007). Vigor is exhibited by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and has been characterized as the opposite of exhaustion.

The second measure of higher levels of soft control was concertive control which occurs as control passes from management to worker and results in intrusive degrees of peer pressure to perform upon individual employees. The extent that employees felt greater responsibility for their colleague's behavior after the OT intervention was taken as a general indication that increased concertive control had been introduced.

The third measure of higher levels of soft control was employee corporate branding. Perceived organizational support (POS) and dedication were measured to capture this phenomenon. POS is the degree to which employees perceive the organization supports them by caring about their well-being and satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and provides a direct measure of the level of pride and commitment employees feel.

## 3. Results

The results indicate significant yet relatively lightweight outcomes from the OT intervention. They revealed a significant low level increase in both empowerment and soft control and a lack of evidence for any high level increase in either area. Table 1 displays the Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for all measures for the combined pilot and control group respondents. Table 2 shows independent sample t-tests (list wise) for a range of measures captured at Times 1 and 2.

**Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here**

### 3.1 Effects on Empowerment

*Low Level Empowerment*

Low-level empowerment was found to increase significantly for the pilot group compared to the control group. In terms of task self-efficacy, there was a relative increase in the pilot group's belief to undertake challenging tasks and a relative decrease in their belief to perform proscribed ones. General linear modeling (GLM) showed that two items had highly significant (p=0.01) main (Time) and significant (p=0.05) interaction (Group) effects from Time 1 to Time 2 with the pilot group's self-efficacy to 'ask customer for appointment' increasing and their self-efficacy to 'smile and make eye contact' decreasing compared to the control group.

In addition to these main and interaction effects, there were weaker but still statistically significant changes for four items ('ask customer for their business'; 'make recommendations'; 'point out improvements'; 'provide warm and friendly greeting') for the pilot group compared to the control group. T-tests showed that for the first three of these four items, there was only a small decrease in the mean for the pilot group from Time 1 to Time 2

whereas the mean for the control group dropped sharply. In contrast, T-tests showed there was no difference in the means at Time 1 for the fourth item (provide warm and friendly greeting) but a significant difference emerged at Time 2.

Overall the pilot group's self-efficacy beliefs to carry out more challenging customer interaction tasks showed a relative improvement compared to the control group as a result of the OT intervention. However, the pilot group's self-efficacy beliefs to undertake more superficial customer interaction tasks such as 'smile and make eye contact' and 'provide warm and friendly greeting' showed a relative decline compared to the control.

**Insert Figures 2a and 2b about here**

In regard to *job performance*, a mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance was conducted to assess the impact of the OT intervention. Figure 3 shows there was a highly significant main (Time) effect (Wilks Lambda = .81, $F$ (1, 79) =19.18, p <.0005) as well as a significant interaction (Group) effect (Wilks Lambda = .94, $F$ (1, 79) =5.28, p=0.024).

**Insert Figure 3 about here**

With regards to *mystery shopping*, Table 3 shows that the mean for the pilot group increased from 44.7% prior to the OT intervention to 60.5% after the intervention finished while the control group's mean (51.5%) was identical before and after the OT intervention. Similarly, the frequency that researchers were offered the opportunity to make a profiling appointment increased for the pilot group from 0 out of 10 visits to 4 out of 10 visits whereas the frequency for the control group stayed the same (1 out of 10 visits). With respect to s*upervisor ratings*, Table 4 shows the modal response of 'fair improvement' was consistent with other anecdotal feedback received informally from the host organization.

*Higher Level Empowerment*

There was no difference between the pilot and control group before or after the OT intervention in regard to: generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem or locus of control.

### 3.2 Effects on Soft Control

*Lower Level Soft Control*

GLM tests showed there were highly significant main (Time) and interaction (Group) effects for absorption (p=0.010) from Time 1 to Time 2 (See Figure 4).

**Insert Figure 4 about here**

*Higher Level Soft Control*

With respect to deep acting, GLM showed close to weakly significant (p=0.135) main (Time) and interaction (Group) effects from Time 1 to Time 2 that directly related to the significant (p=0.066) decrease from 2.86 to 2.40 in the pilot group's mean. In regard to perspective taking, T-tests showed there was a significant difference (p=0.046) between the mean for the pilot (3.83) and control (4.30) groups at Time 2. As perspective taking was highly correlated (p=0.002) with deep acting, the significantly lower mean reported by the pilot group at Time 2 suggests the pilot group felt less need to adopt the customer's perspective. In relation to emotional exhaustion, GLM showed a close to weakly significant (p=0.119) interaction (Group) effect for vigor from Time 1 to Time 2.

With respect to concertive control, there was no change in the level of felt responsibility for colleagues as a result of the OT intervention. Similarly, GLM and T-tests showed there was no change in dedication between the pilot and control groups. Finally, in relation to perceived organization support, there was no significant difference between the groups. Therefore, normative control did not change as a result of the OT intervention.

## 4. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore OT's effects through an in-depth longitudinal field experiment. The specific focus was on the contributions the OT intervention made to employee empowerment and the introduction of new forms of soft control. The field study results confirmed recent arguments that it is possible for organizational initiatives to simultaneously increase autonomy *and* control (Courpasson, 2006; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). The pilot group's self-efficacy beliefs and task performance in regard to initiating customer interactions improved significantly compared to the control group and they were

relatively more attuned to the needs of customers and making more appointments. While both the pilot and control groups were subject to similar increases in performance monitoring and evaluation, the pilot group out-performed the control group on the key customer service dimensions. In this way, the outcome of the OT intervention was a 'lightweight' increase in empowerment *and* soft control.

What the outcomes of the field experiment also showed was that these relatively 'lightweight' increases in empowerment and soft control were not accompanied by more 'heavyweight' increases in either area. Empowerment remained restricted to task self-efficacy in enlarged frontline service jobs, a development that did not lead to more generalized feelings of self-efficacy, self-esteem or personal control; nor did it lead to any higher levels of job enrichment or employee participation in decision-making. Soft control remained at the level of increased attention to customer desires and higher levels of performance in meeting targets for customer appointments. This was not, however, accompanied by any indications of exacting and stressful emotional labor, concertive control by peers or greater identification with or commitment to the company. The organizational intervention was, in this sense, more lightweight in outcomes than supporters of radical theatre have hoped and critics of corporate theatre have feared.

In summary, the intervention was far from being what Clark and Mangham (2004) called 'Boal-lite' in its methods, but could be quite justifiably so-described in its aims and purposes. Its lightweight effects on empowerment and the introduction of soft control may have been strongly affected by this character. Further research in this field would be well-advised to produce more systematic typologies of OT interventions, as well as more rigorous longitudinal evaluations of the effects of different types of OT interventions. This paper has hopefully provided at least a partial contribution to a more informed study of OT's effects.

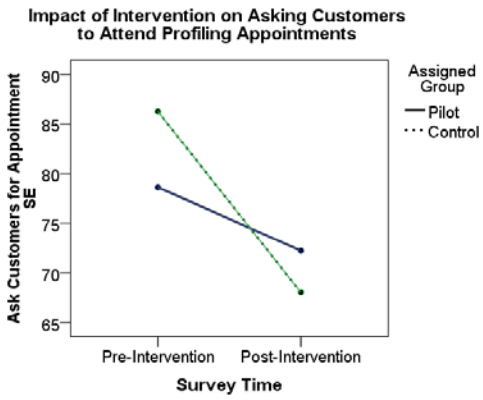
## Figure 1

## Intervention and Performance Measurement Timeline

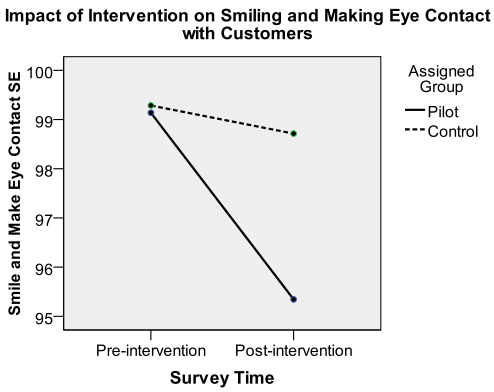
| **Group:** | **Pilot & Control** | **Pilot Only** | **Pilot Only** | **Pilot & Control** | **Pilot & Control** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Q4 07 (End)** | **Q1 08 (Beg)** | **Q2 08 (Late)** | **Q3 08 (Late)** | **Q4 08 (End)** |
| **Activity:** | Pre-Intervention Survey (T1) | Workshops 1 & 2 (Half Day) | DVD's Introduced | Post-Intervention Survey (T2) | Final Data Collection |
| **Mystery Shopping** | (Pre-workshop 1) | (Post-workshop 2) | (Pre-DVD's) | (Post-DVD's) | |

**Corporate Merger Announcement**

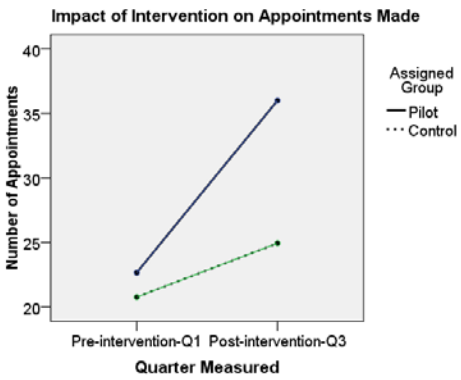
## Figure 2a




## Figure 2b




## Figure 3




## Figure 4

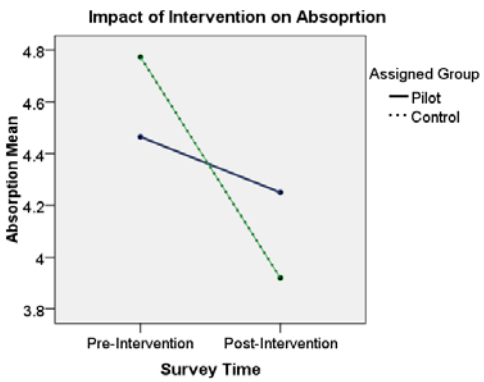


**TABLE 1**

**Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Self Efficacy and Performance[a]**

| Variable | Mean T1 | S.D. T1 | Mean T2 | S.D. T2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. App't Single SE | 83.7 | 18.9 | 70.9 | 19.7 | - | .377$^{*}$ | .529$^{**}$ | .479$^{**}$ | .479$^{**}$ | .514$^{**}$ | .046 | -.291$^{*}$ | .258$^{X}$ | .316$^{*}$ | .076 | .362$^{**}$ | .428$^{**}$ | .305$^{*}$ | .456$^{**}$ |
| 2. Appointments Made | 21.7 | 24.3 | 30.1 | 32.7 | .049 | - | .434$^{**}$ | .334$^{*}$ | .455$^{**}$ | .423$^{**}$ | -.043 | -.329$^{*}$ | .198 | .349$^{*}$ | .335$^{*}$ | .217 | .447$^{**}$ | .072 | .261 |
| 3. Engagement | 4.8 | 0.93 | 4.1 | 0.89 | .482$^{**}$ | .069 | - | .926$^{**}$ | .907$^{**}$ | .948$^{**}$ | .123 | -.220$^{X}$ | .326$^{*}$ | .240$^{X}$ | .248$^{X}$ | .500$^{**}$ | 504$^{**}$ | .398$^{**}$ | .491$^{**}$ |
| 4. Absorption | 4.6 | 1.04 | 4.1 | 0.98 | .416$^{**}$ | .019 | .850$^{**}$ | - | .736$^{**}$ | .829$^{**}$ | .127 | -.128 | .251$^{X}$ | .243$^{X}$ | .200 | .478$^{**}$ | .462$^{**}$ | .311$^{*}$ | .474$^{**}$ |
| 5. Vigor | 4.6 | 1.15 | 3.9 | 0.90 | .449$^{**}$ | .116 | .901$^{**}$ | .616$^{**}$ | - | .926$^{**}$ | .907$^{**}$ | .948$^{**}$ | .123 | -.220$^{X}$ | .326$^{*}$ | .240$^{X}$ | .248$^{X}$ | .500$^{**}$ | 504$^{**}$ |
| 6. Dedication | 5.0 | 0.97 | 4.3 | 0.99 | .393$^{**}$ | .048 | .898$^{**}$ | .650$^{**}$ | .745$^{**}$ | - | .736$^{**}$ | .829$^{**}$ | .127 | -.128 | .251$^{X}$ | .243$^{X}$ | .200 | .478$^{**}$ | .462$^{**}$ |
| 7. Deep Acting | 2.6 | 1.29 | 2.6 | 1.28 | .038 | .215 | .105 | .150 | .058 | .035 | - | .341$^{**}$ | .411$^{**}$ | -.013 | .024 | -.151 | .065 | .144 | .153 |
| 8. Surface Acting | 1.7 | 1.00 | 1.7 | 1.05 | -.148 | -.134 | -.211$^{*}$ | -.102 | -.188 | -.250$^{*}$ | .345$^{**}$ | - | -.069 | -.051 | -.062 | -.235$^{X}$ | -160 | -.214 | -.161 |
| 9. Perspective Taking | - | - | 4.1 | 0.84 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | .144 | .211 | .092 | .184 | .378$^{**}$ | .196 |
| 10. FRO Colleague | 4.0 | 0.97 | 4.2 | 1.01 | .337$^{**}$ | .106 | .297$^{**}$ | .302$^{**}$ | .235$^{*}$ | .217$^{*}$ | .025 | .053 | - | - | .613$^{**}$ | .123 | .208 | .293$^{*}$ | .320$^{*}$ |
| 11. FRO Customer | 4.6 | 0.47 | 4.6 | 0.58 | .327$^{**}$ | .077 | .508$^{**}$ | .407$^{**}$ | .442$^{**}$ | .483$^{**}$ | .028 | -.097 | - | .569$^{**}$ | - | .338$^{**}$ | .286$^{*}$ | .323$^{*}$ | .255$^{X}$ |
| 12. Perc'd Org. Support | 4.9 | 1.15 | 4.7 | 1.10 | .268$^{**}$ | -.184 | .513$^{**}$ | .379$^{**}$ | .421$^{**}$ | .579$^{**}$ | .039 | -.258$^{*}$ | - | .222$^{*}$ | .384$^{**}$ | - | .292$^{*}$ | .303$^{*}$ | .388$^{*}$ |
| 13. Generalized SE | 5.8 | 0.73 | 5.8 | 0.68 | .269$^{**}$ | .038 | .534$^{**}$ | .385$^{**}$ | .480$^{**}$ | .542$^{**}$ | -.041 | -.137 | - | .248$^{*}$ | .428$^{**}$ | -.502$^{**}$ | - | .558$^{**}$ | .512$^{**}$ |
| 14. Self-Esteem | 5.6 | 1.00 | 5.8 | 1.02 | 228$^{*}$ | -.105 | .289$^{*}$ | .192$^{X}$ | .226$^{*}$ | .331$^{**}$ | -.101 | -.171 | - | .021 | .119 | -.447$^{**}$ | .618$^{**}$ | - | .492$^{**}$ |
| 15. Locus of Control | 5.0 | 0.75 | 4.9 | 0.77 | .176$^{X}$ | .026 | .301$^{*}$ | .210$^{**}$ | .274$^{**}$ | .306$^{**}$ | -.114 | -.112 | - | .188 | .192$^{X}$ | -.304$^{**}$ | .362$^{**}$ | .364$^{**}$ | - |

[a] Values below the diagonal result from the Time 1 survey; those above the diagonal result from the Time 2 survey.

$^{**}$Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). $^{*}$ Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). $^{X}$ Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).

**TABLE 2**

***Selection of Independent Samples T-Tests***

| Variable | Pilot Mean T1 | Control MeanT1 | Sig (2-tailed) | Pilot Mean T2 | Control Mean T2 | Sig (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Warm and Friendly Greeting Self-Efficacy | 99.14 | 99.46 | .612 | 97.07 | 99.11 | .074[x] |
| Point Out Improvements Self-Efficacy | 89.66 | 94.79 | .073[x] | 88.28 | 90.54 | .487 |
| Make Recommendations Self-Efficacy | 88.97 | 95.00 | .045[*] | 87.93 | 89.29 | .667 |
| Ask for Business Self-Efficacy | 88.79 | 95.36 | .019[*] | 85.52 | 86.96 | .715 |
| Appointments Made | 22.66 | 20.77 | .729 | 36.00 | 24.93 | .129 |
| Deep Acting | 2.86 | 2.73 | .713 | 2.40 | 2.73 | .367 |
| Surface Acting | 1.54 | 1.97 | .129 | 1.48 | 2.04 | .053[*] |
| Flexible Role Orientation Colleague | 3.63 | 4.20 | .045[*] | 3.86 | 4.43 | .043[*] |
| Flexible Role Orientation Customer | 4.57 | 4.69 | .324 | 4.32 | 4.81 | .008[**] |
| Perceived Organizational Support | 4.91 | 4.69 | .494 | 4.85 | 4.47 | .189 |
| Job Stress | 2.74 | 3.16 | .317 | 2.83 | 3.53 | .098[x] |
| Satisfaction with Life | 4.95 | 5.20 | .442 | 5.16 | 5.04 | .684 |

[**]Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). [*] Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). [X] Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).

**TABLE 3**

***Mean Mystery Shopping Results for Pilot, Control and Major Groups***

| Branch Group | Pre Intervention | Post Workshops | Pre DVD | Post DVD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pilot** | 44.7 | 52.6 | 49.7 | 60.5 |
| **Control** | 51.5 | 37.1 | 47.9 | 51.5 |
| **Major** | 55.2 | 51.9 | 49.1 | 54.6 |
| **Mean** | 50.6 | 47.4 | 48.9 | 55.5 |

**TABLE 4**

***Perceived Change in Participant Skill and Confidence as Rated by Branch Managers***

| Behavior | | Got Worse/ No Change | Slight Improvement | Fair Improvement | Major Improvement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Start Meaningful Conversations | Number | | | 3 | |
| | Quality | | | 2 | 1 |
| Generate Leads | Number | | | 2 | 1 |
| | Quality | | | 1 | 2 |
| Conduct Customer Interviews | Number | | | 3 | |
| | Quality | | 1 | | 2 |
| Ask for Customers Business | Number | | 1 | 2 | |
| | Quality | | 1 | 2 | |
| **TOTAL** | | | **3** | **15** | **6** |

# Part 4 – Proactive Behaviour Related Appendices

## Appendix IX – Accepted Conference Paper

***Presented to Division 14 of the 117th Meeting of the American Psychology Association (2009)***

**Title: Role Breadth Self-Efficacy, Role Orientation & Performance: A Field Experiment**

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Self-efficacy refers to people's judgment in their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands (Bandura, 1986) and is a core component of Locke and Latham's (2004) model of work motivation. Self-efficacy based interventions are associated with a 28% average lift in performance, which is at least double the effect size of related interventions like goal setting or feedback and coaching (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). The importance of the concept of self-efficacy is such that, in recent times, it has been identified as a core component of several higher-order motivational concepts, including empowerment (Spreitzer, 1996), core confidence (Stajkovic, 2006) and positive psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2007). Nevertheless, in spite of self-efficacy's acknowledged importance, there are significant limitations to the studies undertaken. Experimental designs have: (1) been set in classrooms rather than organizational settings; (2) involved simulated rather than work-related tasks; (2) used students rather than employees as the main participants; (3) measured training outcomes rather than job performance; and (4) rarely been longitudinal (Saks, 1995a).

A further challenge in work related, self-efficacy studies is differentiating between task specific self-efficacy which is recognized as a relatively malleable belief (Bandura, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992) and generalized self-efficacy which is seen as a relatively stable, global competence belief (Chen, 2001; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). To specifically address this latter issue, Parker (1998) introduced the concept of role breadth self-efficacy (RBSE) which refers to one's perceived capability of carrying out a range of proactive, interpersonal, and integrative activities that extend beyond the technical core (Parker et al., 2006). In order to achieve organizational objectives, employees are increasingly expected to go from passively

carrying out narrowly defined tasks to proactively and flexibly engaging in broad and emergent work roles (Parker, 2000b). More empirical work is needed to investigate the link between RBSE, role orientation and job performance within organizational settings, especially longitudinally.

The current study was undertaken to address this shortcoming. Besides measuring the relationship between an example of RBSE (namely Proactive Customer Self-Efficacy), role orientation and performance, we investigated the effect of an intervention specifically designed to enhance employees' self-efficacy for initiating a range of proactive customer conversations. The intervention incorporated several techniques embodying cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) principles. The first technique (Forum Theatre or Theatre of the Oppressed) is a form of simultaneous dramaturgy or participative theatre where participants watch a scripted performance and participate in analysing the performance and coaching the actors on different ways of constructing it. The second technique (Rehearse for Reality) is a variation of role playing where participants enter a dyadic role play with a trained actor while other participants watch. Finally, a variation of Entertainment Education (E-E) (Singhal, 2004) in the form of three short DVD's was given to participants and used in team based discussions approximately four months after the initial workshops.

## SUBJECTS USED

Employees from twenty, mid-sized branches of a large financial services company in a major Australian city served as subjects. Each branch typically had 5-6 employees: Manager (1); Supervisor (1); and Frontline (3-4). Of the 104 subjects completing the pre-intervention survey, 63% were Frontline, 18% were Supervisors and 19% were Managers. 37% of employees worked full-time and 63% worked part-time (all permanent positions). With respect to length of employment, the range was from: less than one year (20%); one to five years (40%); six to ten years (10%); eleven to twenty years (15%); and over twenty years (15%).

## PROCEDURE

These branches were split into two equivalent groups (experimental and control) using geographic and customer demographic criteria. Employees from the experimental group participated in 2 half day workshops (4 weeks apart) as well as watching 3 DVD's featuring the ongoing journey of the characters created in the workshops.

The pre and post intervention surveys were composed of two sets of measures. First, a number of psychometric measures (100 items altogether) captured a range of employee attitudes with respect to areas such as flexible role orientation, job stress and personality

differences. These measures used pre-existing valid and reliable scales. Second, measures of RBSE for proactive customer conversations were developed from selected employee interviews and collected using a 100 point Grid system based adopted from Bandura's "Guide for Constructing Self Efficacy Scales". Performance data covering 3 years (12 quarters) for all respondents was also collected.

## RESULTS

Factor analysis found two factor structures for the RBSE measure (proactive and basic) and role orientation (customer and colleague), and a three factor structure for role performance (task, proactive and customer). There was a positive correlation between proactive RBSE and the five role factors (See Table 1) using the Pearson correlation coefficient with no violation of assumptions.

**Table 1:**

**Correlations between Proactive Customer Role Breadth Self-Efficacy, Flexible Role Orientation and Role Performance – Pre Intervention**

| | | Pearson Correlation | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Role Orientation | Customer | .294** | 0.01 (2-tailed). |
| | Colleague | .323** | 0.01 (2-tailed). |
| Role Performance | Task | .392** | 0.01 (2-tailed). |
| | Proactive | .175[X] | 0.10 (2-tailed). |
| | Customer | .230** | 0.05 (2-tailed). |

Standard multiple regression was used to assess the ability of RBSE (proactive) and the other psychometric scales to predict each of the role factors. Preliminary analyses showed there were no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity and multicollinearity. The range of variation that was explained by RBSE (proactive) and other measures ranged from a high of 38.3% to a low of 10.3% (See Table 2).

**Table 2:**

**Standard Multiple Regression Results**

| | Time | Adj. R Square | Predictors (Scale) | Std. Coeff. Beta | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Role Orientation | Customer | .383 | Perceived Organizational Support | .274 | .001 |
| | | | Organizational Understanding | .516 | .000 |
| | Colleague | .243 | Proactive RBSE | .240 | .022 |
| | | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .227 | .035 |
| | | | Extraversion | -.275 | .007 |
| Role Performance | Task | .349 | Organizational Understanding | .333 | .000 |
| | | | Perceived Organizational Support | -.154 | .100 |
| | | | Deep Acting | .146 | .093 |
| | | | Conscientiousness | .433 | .000 |
| | Proactive | .155 | Emotional Stability (Reverse) | -.334 | .001 |
| | Customer | .328 | Organizational Understanding | .248 | .010 |
| | | | Proactive RBSE | .291 | .003 |
| | | | Surface Acting | .213 | .018 |
| | | | Agreeableness | .322 | .000 |

Paired sample T-tests were performed to measure the impact of the intervention. The pre-intervention survey showed there was a significant difference (p=.05) in Proactive Customer RBSE between the Control and Pilot groups but no difference in the post-intervention survey (See Table 3). Similarly, the pre-intervention survey showed there was nearly a significant difference (p=.12) in Make Appointments TSSE between the Control and Pilot groups but no difference in the post-intervention survey (See Table 4). In both instances, the Pilot Group rated their RBSE and TSSE higher than the Control Group in the post intervention survey, the reverse of the pre-intervention one.

**Table 3:**

**Proactive Customer RBSE Measures Pre and Post Intervention**

| Measure | Time | Mean | Std Dev. | Std Error | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RBSE - Pre | Pilot | 84.77 | 13.15 | 2.44 | .045* |
| | Control | 91.19 | 10.23 | 1.93 | |
| RBSE - Post | Pilot | 79.77 | 16.64 | 3.09 | .766 |
| | Control | 78.51 | 15.12 | 2.86 | |

*Significant at .05 level

**Table 4:**

**Make Appointment TSSE Measures Pre and Post Intervention**

| Measure | Time | Mean | Std Dev. | Std Error | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TSSE - Pre | Pilot | 78.62 | 19.77 | 3.67 | .122 |
| | Control | 86.25 | 16.70 | 3.16 | |
| TSSE - Post | Pilot | 72.24 | 20.42 | 3.78 | .430 |
| | Control | 68.04 | 19.45 | 3.68 | |

Finally, mystery shopping data, number of appointments made and products sold will be presented at APA. All three sets of data show a significant increase for the Pilot Group compared to the Control Group. Therefore, the positive relative improvement in TSSE and RBSE for the Pilot Group brought about by the intervention appears to have flowed through into performance improvements in line with previous studies.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study assessed the relationship between RBSE and performance, implying organizations need to improve RBSE to have an impact on performance. In addition to RBSE, different psychometric variables predict the five role orientation factors. The self-efficacy enhancing intervention succeeded in buffering the pilot group compared to the control group due to changes in the external environment.

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# Appendix X – Draft Journal Article

***Target Journal - Journal of Applied Psychology***

TITLE: Antecedents and Consequences of Role Breadth Self-Efficacy, Flexible Role Orientation and Performance: A Field Experiment


Abstract

Role Breadth Self-Efficacy (RBSE) and Flexible Role Orientation (FRO) are malleable cognitive motivational states that have been shown to have a positive impact on workplace behaviour, affective states and performance outcomes. Previous studies have been undertaken in manufacturing environments and have typically been cross-sectional with single source, self-report data employed to assess these impacts. The current study extends the literature by undertaking an intervention to increase employee RBSE and FRO as part of longitudinal field experiment in a retail financial service organization with both organizational and self-report performance data. Pre-intervention (n=104) and post-intervention (n=59) self-report surveys assessed a number of individual and organizational variables as antecedents of a range of behavioural, affective, attitudinal and compliance outcomes. The mediating effects of RBSE and FRO and two other cognitive motivational states were then analysed. The results confirm RBSE and FRO explain a significant proportion of the variance between the antecedents and outcomes.



Keywords: self-efficacy, flexible role orientation, performance, employee engagement

In order to achieve organizational objectives, employees are increasingly expected to go from passively carrying out narrowly defined tasks to proactively and flexibly engaging in broad and emergent work roles (Parker, 2000b). This trend is being driven by continuing globalization, advances in information technology enabling mass customization, greater customer fragmentation, specialized needs and increasing competition. Organizations today are, more than ever, reliant on human capital to provide sustainable competitive advantage nurturing an environment where employees chose to expend 'discretionary effort' in proactive and flexible ways. Indeed, this focus on capturing discretionary effort has manifested itself in recent years as organizations and scholars investigate the role of employee engagement in applied settings. Therefore, developing a better understanding of the antecedents and consequences of having a proactive and flexible work force is increasingly called for.

Two key variables that have been identified as instrumental in helping organizations achieve this objective are Role Breadth Self Efficacy (RBSE) and Flexible Role Orientation (FRO) (Parker 2000). These constructs have been shown to have discriminant validity and to be factorially distinct from other common psychological constructs used in organizational research such as job satisfaction, general self-efficacy and organizational citizenship (Parker 1997, 1998). Both have been conceptualized as cognitive-motivational states with attendant individual and organizational antecedents as well as proactive, compliance and affective outcomes (Parker et al 2006). However, research undertaken to date has typically been conducted in manufacturing environments where there is no direct interface between frontline production workers and customers. In contrast, employment in service industries now represent some 85% of all jobs and have both direct and indirect customer contact positions. In this environment, job requirements and interpersonal skills vary markedly from manufacturing. Therefore a key issue is to what extent the relationship between individual and organizational characteristics with proactive behaviours and other outcomes are mediated by RBSE and FRO in a non-manufacturing environment.

Further, proactive, compliance and affective outcomes have been typically been measured using attitudinal scales as a means of judging performance without direct reference to tangible performance. As a clear goal of organizational research is to validate theoretical concepts and laboratory based studies, there is a need to provide empirical evidence of the relationship between individual and organizational characteristics and tangible performance. In addition, it would be beneficial to understand the extent to which proactive cognitive-motivational states mediate these relationships. Not only is it desirable to demonstrate tangible links between individual and organizational characteristics with an array of outcomes, documenting interventions designed to positively impact cognitive-motivational states and the resultant

influence on outcomes would be highly beneficial to practitioners and of great interest to theoreticians.

This paper is designed to address these issues. First we provide a brief review of the proactivity literature with a particular focus on the role of cognitive-motivational states in stimulating proactive behaviour to achieve individual and organizational outcomes. We outline a proposed theoretical model for the antecedents of behavioural, affective, attitudinal and compliance outcomes and the mediating role that cognitive-motivational states play. Next, we describe a field study that used a structured intervention designed to have a positive influence on cognitive-motivational states. As part of the study, we collected pre and post intervention survey and performance data to assess the discriminant validity and factorial distinctiveness of a range of individual and organizational variables, cognitive-motivational states and outcomes. We then present the findings from a series of both straight and hierarchical regression analyses on the predictive validity of individual and organizational variables on behavioural, affective, attitudinal and compliance outcomes and the mediating role of cognitive-motivational states. Finally, we discuss the study's theoretical and practical implications.

## ROLE BREADTH SELF-EFFICACY

The notion of RBSE introduced by Parker (1998) has its origins in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) and its core concept of Self Efficacy (referred to hereafter as Task Specific Self-Efficacy or TSSE). In contrast to TSSE which refers to people's judgment in their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands (Bandura, 1986), RBSE refers to one's perceived capability of carrying out a range of proactive, interpersonal, and integrative activities that extend beyond the technical core (Parker et al., 2006). RBSE differs from TSSE as it refers to employees' belief that they are capable of performing an array of tasks (rather than a single task) given that they are motivated to do so (Parker 1998) but is consistent with Bandura's (1997) emphasis on people's perception that they are able to carry out these tasks rather than whether they are either allowed to or do perform them. In effect, RBSE can be thought of as an amalgam of critical TSSE beliefs for employees to meet challenges in their roles. Both RBSE and TSSE are recognized as relatively malleable beliefs (Bandura, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992) in contrast to Generalized Self-Efficacy (GSE) which is seen as a relatively stable, global competence belief (Chen, 2001; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

The relevance of self-efficacy in organizational studies can best be illustrated by the impact of self-efficacy based interventions on performance. Compared to the improvement in

performance attributed to interventions such as goal setting (10%) or feedback and coaching (14%), self-efficacy based interventions are associated with a 28% average lift in performance, which is at least double the effect size of these common techniques (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Indeed, the importance of the concept of self-efficacy is such that, in recent times, it has been identified as a core component of several higher-order motivational concepts, including empowerment (Spreitzer, 1996), core confidence (Stajkovic, 2006) and positive psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2007). Nevertheless, in spite of self-efficacy's acknowledged role in performance improvement, there are significant limitations to the studies undertaken. Experimental designs have: (1) been set in classrooms rather than organizational settings; (2) involved simulated rather than work-related tasks; (2) used students rather than employees as the main participants; (3) measured training outcomes rather than job performance; and (4) rarely been longitudinal (Saks, 1995a). Therefore, more research on self-efficacy based interventions is needed that addresses these shortcomings.

Given that RBSE is a malleable construct, a critical issue is the extent to which it responds to environmental, behavioural and intrapersonal factor. The interaction between these factors has been labelled 'triadic reciprocity' and has been shown to change due to an intervention over time (Ozer & Bandura, 1990). The key to helping people increase their confidence in their competence to undertake challenging tasks is to expose them to at least one or more of the four ways in which self-efficacy is enhanced: enactive mastery, vicarious learning, feedback and coaching and being in a heightened physiological state (Bandura 1997). To that end, organizational practices such as training, workplace communication, work re-design, job enlargement and job enrichment clearly have the potential to influence self-efficacy (Parker 1998). However, relatively few empirical studies have demonstrated enhanced RBSE through organizational practice (particularly in the services sector) as most studies have been confined to the manufacturing environment. Therefore, more empirical work is needed to investigate the link between RBSE, its antecedents and job performance within organizational settings, especially longitudinally.

## FLEXIBLE ROLE ORIENTATION

The phenomenon of 'job myopia' has long been recognized as a potential impediment to employee performance and receptivity to change and therefore poses a significant constraint on achieving organizational outcomes (Davis & Wacker 1987, Klein 1976, Parker 2000). This "that's not my job" syndrome is essentially an issue of role definition: how employees define their work roles including the types and breadth of tasks, goals and problems they see as their set of responsibilities (Parker 2007). To the extent that employees perceive their

roles in a "Tayloristic" fashion with a focus on specific and narrow tasks, their ability to respond to opportunities to improve organizational performance is limited. Conversely, employees that define their roles in a broader context while still performing their core tasks to a high standard will be able to help organizations meet the wider challenges they face. Having a broader conception of role orientation is particularly important in the service sector where there is direct contact between frontline employees and customers and organizations are striving wherever possible to meet their needs and exceed expectations wherever possible. Therefore, developing a deeper understanding of the influence of employee perceptions of their role orientations on outcomes is a critical organizational issue.

The notion of flexible role orientation (FRO) was developed specifically to address the need for a broader conception or role definition or orientation (Parker 1997). FRO is similar to RBSE as it is considered to be a malleable belief that can change in response to the environment or intrapersonal change (Parker 1997). Due to its emphasis on cognition rather than affect, FRO is distinguishable from concepts such as job satisfaction and affective commitment while its definition as a malleable belief in how one defines one's role boundaries and therefore the limits of discretionary effort suggests FRO is also a motivational construct. Therefore, FRO is closely aligned to RBSE as a proactive cognitive-motivational state. As a cognitive-motivational state that can change over time in response to environmental or behavioural factors, FRO may also be responsive to interventions designed to raise positive beliefs that result in sustainable behavioural change. Therefore, organizational practices such as training, workplace communication, work re-design, job enlargement and job enrichment may have the same potential to influence FRO that has previously been identified for RBSE.

The development of the FRO concept was initiated in the manufacturing sector where self-starting and improvement-oriented behaviours such as proactivity are increasingly critical (Campbell 2000, Crant 2000). However, developing a more flexible and responsive workforce through the FRO concept is arguably even more important in the service sector where frontline employees and managers frequently interact directly with customers whose needs and expectations are evolving over time in response to changes in the marketplace. Indeed, the recent explosion of interest in employee engagement where capturing employees 'discretionary effort' is a tacit recognition of the level of proactive employees can chose to undertake. Service sector organizations are increasingly reliant on the quality of the employee/customer interaction to maintain customer loyalty and build long-term relationships not just manage transactions. Further, there is growing need for employees to anticipate and proactively initiate relationship building activities that potentially lead to broader and deeper

customer relationships rather than simply reactively responding to customer requests. Although a positive relationship between FRO and job performance has been found in the manufacturing sector (Parker 2007), field studies have not been undertaken in the service sector.

## THEORETICAL MODEL

RBSE and FRO are cognitive motivational states that have been shown to act as mediators of organizational performance particularly as it relates to proactive behaviour. Therefore, it is important to understand how they interact with individual and organizational antecedents of behavioural, affective, attitudinal and compliance outcomes. This study is directed towards developing such an understanding. We have modified the model of proactive work behaviour proposed by Parker et al (2006) in order to explore a wider range of intrapersonal and organizational characteristics that potentially act as outcome antecedents (See Figure 1). Further, we have added two TSSE cognitive-motivational states that were directly relevant to the field study. Finally, we have broadened the measurement of performance by including behavioural, affective, attitudinal and compliance outcomes.

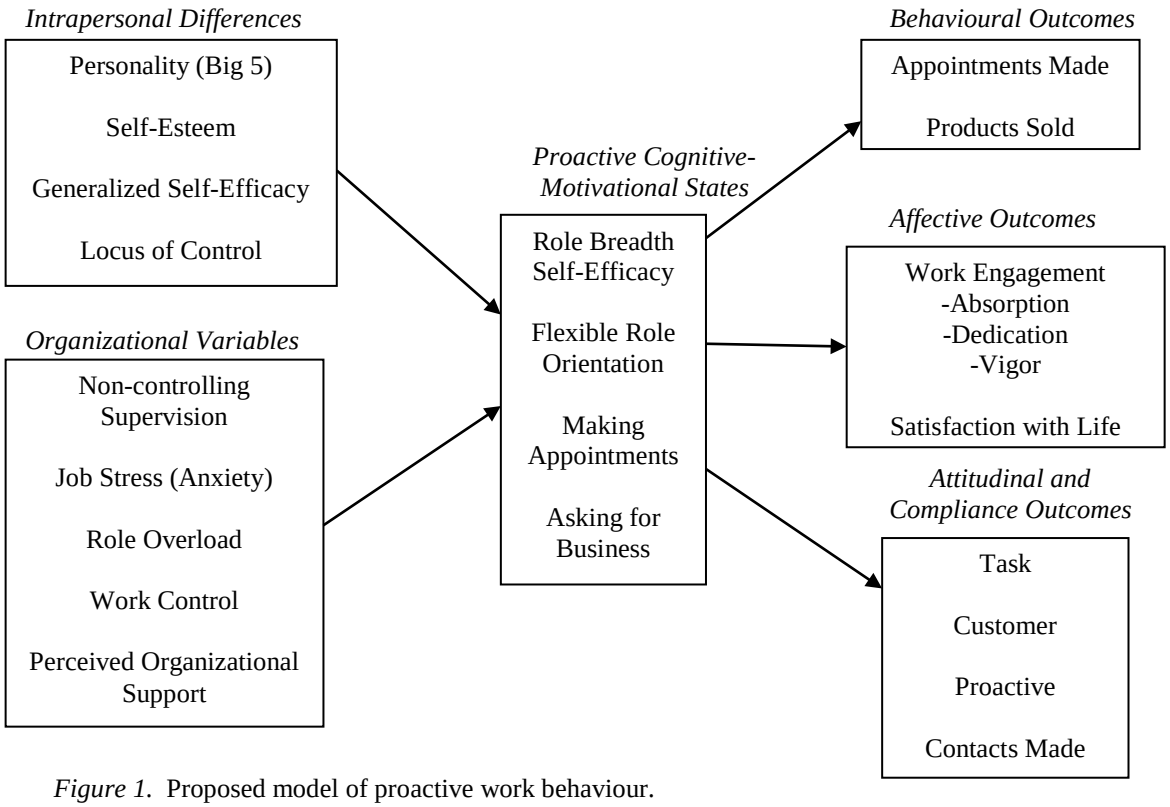



*Figure 1.* Proposed model of proactive work behaviour.

Our model is consistent with Parker et al (2006) in suggesting that these proximal, proactive cognitive-motivational states act as mediators of the distal relationship between intrapersonal

differences and organizational variables with behavioural, affective, attitudinal and compliance outcomes. However, the modifications we have suggested are aimed at providing a more generalized view of the role of proactivity's antecedents and a wider array of outcome measures. We have expanded the number of potential organizational variables to five (non-controlling supervision, job stress (anxiety), role overload, work control and perceived organizational support) from three (job autonomy, co-worker trust and supportive supervision). Job autonomy, co-worker trust and supportive supervision were used in the Parker et al (2006) study where semi-autonomous work teams were working in a production context. In contrast, the current study was conducted in retail financial services organization with the main focus on the individual's sense of personal agency and control in being proactive to make appointments with customers during over the counter transactions. Given the different work environment and area of focus, we elected to use the level of work control and role overload instead of job autonomy to more closely reflected this change and the fact that personal agency and control that is at the heart of self-efficacy (Bandura 1997). Perceived organizational support was substituted for co-worker trust as the general level of support for employee has been found to be an important predictor of affective outcomes. With respect to measuring supervision, the importance of personal agency and control suggested that we use a measure (non-controlling supervision) that captured that element more closely than supporting supervision which was designed to measure enhanced leader effectiveness in a self-managing context. Finally, we measured job stress (anxiety) to see if the intervention reduced employee anxiety and therefore had a positive impact on outcomes.

With respect to proactive cognitive-motivational states, Parker et al (2006) found that RBSE and FRO had positive links with proactive work behaviour whereas control appraisals and change orientation did not. Therefore, these two cognitive-motivational states were dropped. In their place, we added two TSSE measures (Making Appointments and Asking for Business) as they were the specific behavioural foci that the intervention was designed to increase interpersonal skill. By adding these task specific measures, we were able to judge the relative benefits of using TSSE and RBSE cognitive-motivational states to predict outcomes. In addition, these two TSSE measures could be directly tied to specific behavioural outcomes to test whether TSSE measures were more accurate in predicting outcomes than the other proactive cognitive-motivational states.

Finally, we grouped outcomes into three classifications: behavioural; affective; and attitudinal and compliance. It was important to capture behavioural outcomes as tangible evidence that intrapersonal and organizational characteristics acted as antecedents of proactive behaviour and provided the opportunity to assess whether the cognitive-

motivational states acted as mediators. Although proximal affective outcomes are a non-proactive motivational state, they are still a valuable means to measure employee.

## METHOD

### Organizational Background and Sample

Employees from twenty, mid-sized branches of an independently branded retail business within a large Australasian financial services organization participated in the research. The organization had launched a program encouraging employees to proactively ask customers to make an appointment (either over the counter (OTC) or via outbound telephone call) to review the customers financial needs. They also introduced a sophisticated performance measurement system to follow the initiative's progress. However, the appointment targets were not being achieved.

Each branch typically had 5-6 employees: Manager (1); Supervisor (1); and Frontline (3-4). The twenty branches were split into two equivalent groups using geographic and customer demographic criteria. The pilot group participated in an innovative task specific self-efficacy (TSSE) intervention while the other half served as a control group. Participant profiles (job type, employment classification and length of employment are summarized in Table X.

Table 1

Participant Profiles

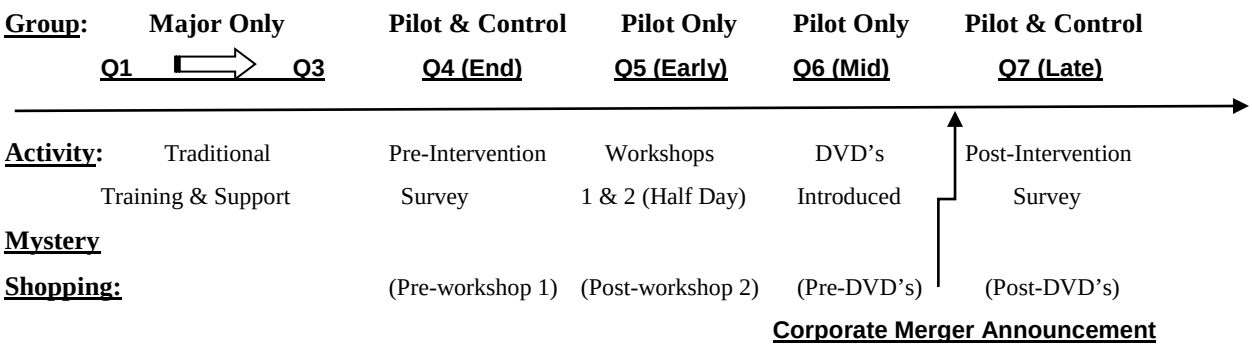
| Job Classification | Manager (Pre/Post) | Supervisor (Pre/Post) | Frontline (Pre/Post) | Employment Classification | Full-time (Pre/Post) | Part-time (Pre/Post) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **18/13** | **19/13** | **61/32** | | **35/25** | **63/33** |
| Length Of Employment | Less than 1 Year (Pre/Post) | 1-5 Years (Pre/Post) | 6-10 Years (Pre/Post) | 11-20 Years (Pre/Post) | 20+ Years (Pre/Post) | |
| | **21/11** | **40/24** | **9/4** | **14/10** | **14/9** | |

### Intervention

The intervention was designed to increase participant TSSE. Employees from the pilot group attended two half day workshops (four weeks apart) that used two techniques embodying cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) principles. The first, 'Forum Theatre' (or Theatre of the Oppressed) is a form of simultaneous dramaturgy where participants (spect-actors) watch a scripted performance (in this case illustrating proactive customer conversations) and participate in analysing the performance and coaching the actors on different ways of constructing it. The second, Rehearse for Reality, is a variation of role playing where participants engage in a dyadic role play with a trained actor/facilitator while other participants watch. Employees from both the pilot and control groups completed pre and post intervention surveys. In order to support employees back in the workplace, a

variation of Entertainment Education (E-E) (Singhal, 2004) was introduced approximately three months after the second workshop. This part of the intervention involved three short (six minute) DVD's being shown over a three week period in a regular team meeting. The DVD's featured characters created during the workshops and were designed to maintain/increase TSSE. Figure 2 shows the intervention's timeline.

**Figure 2: Intervention and Performance Measurement Timeline**




In the intervention, Forum Theatre demonstrated proactive customer conversation issues, Rehearse for Reality gave participants practice at these conversations and E-E served to reinforce participant behavioural change.

We expected the workshops to enhance employee engagement and performance, in part through increasing the four principal sources of self-efficacy information (Bandura, 1997): enactive mastery experiences; vicarious experiences; verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences; and physiological and affective states. Vicarious experiences were likely to occur because participants watched actors demonstrate both how and how not to have effective customer conversations, and how to deal with setbacks. Enactive mastery was likely to occur because participants were involved in personal action planning and role playing. Verbal persuasion was likely to occur because the facilitator encouraged participants to believe they could learn to be effective. Finally, physiological and affective states were likely to be enhanced due to the 'live' environment the workshops were conducted. In combination, we proposed that the intervention would enhance employees' self-efficacy through multiple mechanisms, and thereby increase their performance and engagement.

Surveys were distributed before (n=98; 55 Experimental and 43 Control) and after (n=53; 29 Experimental and 24 Control) the intervention. The overall response rate was approximately 85% (95% Experimental and 75% Control) for the pre-intervention survey and 45% (48% and 40%) for the post-intervention survey. The post-intervention response rate was lower than anticipated, primarily due to a corporate merger announcement (subsequently consummated) at the host organization one week prior to it being available online.

In addition, prior to the intervention employees from twelve larger 'Major' branches completed a 'traditional' training program designed to increase the number of appointments being made. Although the organization did not allow this group to participate in the pre and post intervention surveys, performance data for this group as well as the pilot and control groups was collected from the organization's performance management system. Therefore, this group provided a 'Hawthorn Effect' comparator. Finally, we also collated mystery shopping results across the three groups.

**Measures**

A range of measures was collected as part of a larger survey assessing employee perceptions and work attitudes. The specific measures of interest here described within the three wide categories of antecedents, outcomes and cognitive-motivational states.

**Measures used for Antecedents**

The scales for all predicted antecedents (both intrapersonal and organizational) were standardized as 7 point Likert scales (1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree) for consistency and to avoid respondent confusion. Cronbach's alphas are reported for both the pre-intervention survey (Pre) and post-intervention survey (Post).

With respect to intrapersonal scales, *Personality (Big 5)* was assessed using the 11 items in the Abbreviated Big Five Inventory (Rammstedt & John, 2007). This inventory uses 5 by 2 item scales (1 with an optional 3rd item) to measure the Big Five personality traits and provides a suitable indication of personality when time constraints prohibit a full assessment. With the exception of Openness to Experience (α=-.03), Cronbach's alpha were acceptable for the other four scales and ranged from .52 to .65, bearing in mind their brevity. *Self-Esteem* was measured using Rosenberg's (1979) six item scale. Cronbach's alpha was .70 (Pre) and .74 (Post) which compares favourably with the benchmark range of .72 to .88 for 5 point scales. *Generalized Self-Efficacy* was assessed using the 8 items from Chen et al (2001). Cronbach's alpha was .91 (Pre and Post) which compares favourably with the 5 point scale (α=.87). *Locus of control* was measured using a 6 item scale reported by Lumpkin (1985). Cronbach's alpha was .62 (Pre) and .67 (Post) which compares favourably with the 5 point scale (α=.68).

With respect to organizational variables, *Non-Controlling Supervision* was assessed using 4 items from Oldham & Cummings (1996). Cronbach's alpha was .58 (Pre only) which is comparable with the 5 point scale (α=.67). *Job Stress* was measured using 3 items on the anxiety sub-scale from Parker & Decotiis (1983). Cronbach's alpha was .86 (Pre and Post) which compares favourably with the 5 point scale (α=.71 to .82). *Role Overload* was assessed using 4 items from Bacharach et al (1990). Cronbach's alpha was .73 (Pre only) which is

comparable with the 5 point scale (α=.60 to .64). *Work Control* was measured using 4 items from Dwyer & Ganster (1991). Cronbach's alpha was .85 (Pre only) which is comparable with the 5 point scale (α=.87). Perceived Organizational Support was assessed using 4 items from Eisenberger et al (1986). Cronbach's alpha was .82 (Pre) and .84 (Post) which compares favourably with benchmark 7 point scales (α=.74 to .95).

**Measures of Behavioural, Affective, Attitudinal and Compliance Outcomes**

Due to the availability of the sales and service performance management data, we were able to measure two behavioural (Appointments Made and Products Sold) and one compliance (Contacts Made) outcomes based on 'hard' evidence not just attitudinal responses. This data was important as it provides tangible evidence of the impact of antecedents as well as possible meditational effects of the different cognitive-motivational states. We also collected two types of affective data (Work Engagement including the three sub-scales of Absorption, Dedication and Vigour and Satisfaction with Life. Finally, we collected three types of attitudinal performance data that respondents stated their orientation towards being proactive, staying focused on tasks and being customer oriented.

*Behavioural and Compliance Outcomes* were measured using the sales and service performance management database. This system collects over 200 individual employee performance variables on a quarterly basis and the host organization had instituted a number of compensation schemes and bonus programs that incentivized employees on an individual basis for achieving targets. Therefore, employees saw that achieving targets for these measures as an important part of their roles. However, the host organization's management confirmed that only five performance variables were closely monitored, namely: Number of appointments made over the counter (Appointments Made); Number of appointments made over the telephone (Contacts); Total number of appointments made (Appointments Made plus Contacts); Number of leads generated (Leads); and Number of products sold (Products Sold).

Of these variables, achieving the targets set for the first three variables was seen to be within the control of individual frontline employees as part of their day to day roles and responsibilities whilst the number of leads generated and products sold were seen to be directly proportional to Appointments Made. Given the above, the organizational focus was on Appointments Made as these were seen to be the most natural and effective way to invite customers to attend interviews and employees had many opportunities to do so if they chose to be proactive with customers. Therefore, positive changes in employees becoming more confident in being proactive with customers were likely to be manifested in more Appointments Made, a clear behavioural outcome. Similarly, Products Sold is a behavioural

outcome as it is directly related to the Appointments Made. In contrast, Contacts were seen by employees to be a necessary task that had minimal likelihood of success for a myriad of reasons and was therefore a compliance outcome.

Having identified and classified the most important performance measures, the other measurement issue was which employees (both respondents and others) results should be included in the aggregated pilot, control and major branches. We elected to make our minimum criteria that employees had to work at the host organization for both the one year in which the study was carried out as well as for the immediately preceding year in the same branch. Using these criteria enabled all employees to have had at least one year's frontline experience before being expected to ask customers proactively to attend financial health check appointments. Employees in the Major group were exposed to traditional training during the second half of Year 1 of data collection while employees in the Pilot group participated in the intervention in the first half of Year Two. In summary, two measures (Appointments Made and Products Sold) provided data on a quarterly basis for cross-sectional impacts of antecedents and ascertain changes in behavioural outcomes as a result of the intervention whilst one measure (Contacts) provided similar evidence as a compliance outcome.

*Affective Outcomes* were assessed in two ways. First, we used the 9 item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by (Schaufeli et al., 2006) to measure Work Engagement and the three 3 item sub-scales of Absorption, Dedication and Vigour. This measure uses a customized 7-point Likert scale from 0 (Never) to 6 (Always). For the Work Engagement Scale, Cronbach's alpha was .90 (Pre) and .94 (Post) which compares very favourably with the benchmark ($\alpha$=.92). The sub-scales also had high Cronbach's alpha's ranging from .70 to .83 (Pre) and from .85 to .87 (Post) which compare favourably with the benchmark ($\alpha$=.77 to .85). Second, we measured a more distal construct, Satisfaction with Life using the 5 item scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Our aim was to see whether or not an intervention designed to increase RBSE would have an impact on Satisfaction with Life. In effect, to what extent does RBSE mediate the relationship between these antecedents and a global affective measure such as the Satisfaction with Life Scale. Cronbach's alpha was .91 (Pre) and .88 (Post) which is virtually identical to the benchmark 7-point scale ($\alpha$=.87).

*Attitudinal Outcomes* were assessed in three ways. First proficiency and proactivity were measured by using all 6 items (2 sub-scales) of work role performance developed by Griffin et al (2007). These six items used a 5 point Likert Scale ranging from 1=very little to 5=a great deal and this scale was maintained for the other items in the Attitudinal outcomes section.

Cronbach's alpha for the proficiency scale was .92 (both Pre and Post) and .89 (Pre) and .87 (Post) for the proactivity scale. Both compare favourably with the benchmark reported scale (α=.76 to .92). Second, customer service performance was assessed by modifying four of the seven items in the Proactive Service Performance scale developed by Rank et al (2007) from a supervisor orientation to an individual respondent one. Cronbach's alpha was .84 (Pre) and .79 (Post) which compares favourably with the 7 point scale (α=.91) used in the original study.

**Proactive Cognitive-Motivational State Measures**

*Role Breadth Self-Efficacy (RBSE)* was measured by taking seven of the twenty one single items generated from interviews with a small cross-section of branch level employees from the different job classifications using Bandura's 'Guide for Constructing Self Efficacy Scales" (Pajares & Urdan, 2006) as a guide. Each item requires respondents to indicate on a scale of 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) their level of confidence in undertaking the task described in each item in line with the 100 point Grid system advocated by Bandura (1997). The seven items were selected after conducting a factor analysis which yielded a five factor model. We labelled the dominant factor as 'Proactive Customer Interactions' (subsequently referred to at RBSE) as it had an Initial Eigenvalue of 9.3 and explained over 44% of the variance. The labels for the other factors include: Basic Customer Service (4 items); Product Knowledge (5 items); Computer/Technical (4 items); and Casual Conversational Skill (1 item). These four factors explained an additional 27% of the variance. Cronbach's Alpha for RBSE was .83 (Pre) and .94 (Post).

*Flexible Role Orientation (FRO)* was assessed by using 9 items adapted from Parker et al's (2006) measure of flexible role orientation. Employees were asked to indicate the extent to which they saw various customer and colleague related problems as being of personal concern to them. The response scale ranged from 1 (definitely not my concern) to 5 (definitely my concern). A higher score on the total scale indicates a greater level of FRO through either direct ownership of addressing customer needs through self-action or indirect ownership through perceived lack of action by colleagues. We conducted a factor analysis which yielded a two factor model: FRO Colleague (3 items) and FRO Customer (6 items). FRO Colleague had an Initial Eigenvalue of 4.3 and explained 47% of the variance while FRO Customer had an Initial Eigenvalue of 1.4 and explained an additional 15% of the variance, a total of 62%. Cronbach's Alpha for FRO Colleague was .92 (Pre) and .96 (Post) and for FRO Customer it was .75 (Pre) and .93 (Post) which compare very favourably with the .90 benchmark.

*Task Specific Self-Efficacy (TSSE)* was assessed during the post-intervention phase only by developing two multiple level items based on two key single item Self-Efficacy measures.

These two key measures were (1) Making appointments with customers during an Over-the-Counter Transaction (Making Appointments TSSE) and (2) Asking customers for their business where a clear need has been identified (Ask for Business TSSE). These two measures were directly relevant to the two behavioural outcomes of 'Number of Appointments Made' and 'Number of Products Sold' and therefore were identified as potential mediators. We developed these two measures by creating six scenarios with increasing levels of difficulty (from very easy to very challenging) for each measure in line with the recommendations in Bandura's 'Guide for Constructing Self Efficacy Scales" (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). Besides providing a targeted cognitive-motivational state to assess potential mediation between antecedents and outcomes, introducing multiple level items also addressed ceiling effect issues that occurred in the pre-intervention survey. We conducted a factor analysis on both measures which yielded a two factor model for each: Hard (3 items) and Easy (3 items). 'Ask for Business - Hard' had an Initial Eigenvalue of 3.6 and explained 59% of the variance while 'Ask for Business - Easy' had an Initial Eigenvalue of 1.9 and explained an additional 32% of the variance, a total of 91%. Similarly, 'Making Appointments - Hard' had an Initial Eigenvalue of 4.6 and explained 76% of the variance while 'Making Appointments - Easy' had an Initial Eigenvalue of 1.0 and explained an additional 17% of the variance, a total of 93%. Cronbach's Alpha for Asking for Business - Hard' was .93 (Post only) and for 'Making Appointments – Hard' it was .95 (Post only).

An exploratory factor analysis was undertaken on all Pre-intervention survey items to assess the discreteness of the antecedent and cognitive-motivational variable scales. Two sets of variables were not included on theoretical and empirical grounds to allow a more parsimonious analysis. First, Individual Differences were not included as they were considered to be trait-like constructs and therefore unlikely to be cross load on any of the factors. Second, the two multiple-level cognitive-motivational states (Making Appointments - Hard and Asking for Business – Hard) were excluded because they were only collected at the Post-intervention stage. In addition, these items are effectively asking the same question 3 times to varying degrees of difficulty resulting in the communality of a variable exceeding 1.0 and therefore terminating the extraction. The resulting eleven-factor solution accounted for 72% of the variance in the items. Virtually all items loaded on the expected factor, confirming discriminant validity between the scales (See Appendix A).

In addition to undertaking this exploratory factor analysis, we also conducted a second-order factor analysis of the five antecedents that were measured at both the Pre and Post Intervention stages with the cognitive-motivational variables (See Table 2). At the Pre and Post Intervention stages, the five antecedents all loaded onto a single 'antecedent' factor while

the two FRO scales both loaded onto a single 'flexibility' factor. The two TSSE scales, Making Appointments (Hard) and Asking for Business (Hard) both loaded onto a single 'Confidence' factor. RBSE loaded equally onto the antecedent and confidence factors, reflecting the fact that RBSE is correlated with both the antecedents and other cognitive-motivational states at either the p=.01 or p=.05 levels whereas the two FRO scales are not correlated with two of the five antecedents (Self-Esteem and Job Stress). Therefore, although RBSE loads equally onto two factors, the clear factor structure supports its conceptualization as a cognitive-motivational state.

TABLE 2

Pattern Matrix Factor Loadings for Second-order Factor Analysis of Cognitive Motivational States and Repeated Measures Predictors Using Maximum Likelihood Extraction and Oblimin Rotation

| | **Pre-Intervention** | | | **Post-Intervention** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F1 | F2 | F3 | F1 | F2 | F3 |
| **Antecedents** | | | | | | |
| Job Stress | -.80 | | | -.70 | | |
| Self Esteem | .73 | | | .70 | | |
| General Self Efficacy | .65 | | | .70 | | |
| Locus of Control | .58 | | | .62 | | |
| Perceived Organizational Support | .47 | | | .55 | | |
| **Cognitive-Motivational States** | | | | | | |
| Proactive Customer Role Breadth Self-Efficacy | .35 | .35 | | .45 | .40 | |
| Making Appointments (Hard) | | 1.02 | | | .89 | |
| Asking for Business (Hard) | | .59 | | | .66 | |
| Flexible Role Orientation Customer | | | .76 | | | .89 |
| Flexible Role Orientation Colleague | | | .62 | | | .66 |

## RESULTS

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations for the major survey-based antecedent, cognitive-motivational and outcome variables at the pre-intervention (Time 1) stage. There are statistically significant correlations between the first affective outcome (Work Engagement) and all the antecedents, cognitive-motivational states (p=0.01). There are also consistent statistically significant correlations between the second affective outcome (Satisfaction with Life) and all the antecedents. However, with the exception of RBSE which shows a slightly significant (p=0.10) correlation, the other two cognitive-motivational states are not correlated with Satisfaction of Life. In addition, most of the intrapersonal antecedent/performance outcome dyads are significantly correlated (p=0.01 to p=0.10) with the remaining dyads showing weak, positive correlations. However, with the exception of Organizational Understanding, none of the organizational variables is significantly correlated with performance outcomes. Finally, Task and Customer Performance are significantly correlated (p=0.01 and p=0.05) with all three cognitive-motivational states while Proactive Performance has relatively weak positive correlations with RBSE and FRO Customer and is

only significantly correlated with FRO Colleague. In summary, the pattern of zero-order correlations supports the proposed model.

Table 3

Correlations between Antecedents, Cognitive Motivational States and Pre-Intervention Survey Outcomes (N=100)

| | Work Engagement | Satisfaction with Life | Task Performance | Proactive Performance | Customer Performance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conscientiousness | .41** | .22* | .46** | .15 | .34** |
| Agreeableness | .41** | .21* | .35** | .26** | .42** |
| Neuroticism | -.27** | -.27** | -.33** | -.34** | -.34** |
| General Self-Efficacy | .55** | .44** | .45** | .25* | .35** |
| Self Esteem | .30** | .43** | .34** | .16 | .23* |
| Locus of Control | .32** | .36** | .16 X | .12 | .07 |
| Perceived Organizational Support | .52** | .23* | .09 | .02 | .16 |
| Job Stress (Anxiety) | -.34** | -.24* | -.12 | -.04 | -.11 |
| Work Control | .32** | .22* | .06 | .14 | .11 |
| Organizational Understanding | .33** | .08 | .41** | .30** | .41** |
| Role Breadth Self Efficacy | .59** | .19 X | .24* | .16 | .34** |
| Flexible Role Orientation -Customer | .54** | .03 | .34** | .12 | .24* |
| Flexible Role Orientation -Colleague | .32** | .04 | .20* | .35** | .27** |

****Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). X Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).**

At the post-intervention (Time 2) stage, a very similar pattern to Time 1 emerges with respect to both the significance and direction of the survey-based antecedents, cognitive-motivational and outcome variables. In some instances, changes in significance are attributable to the lower response rate at Time 2 while in other cases, it appears that the intervention had an influence. With the exception of Neuroticism, there are statistically significant correlations between Work Engagement and all the antecedents and cognitive-motivational states (p=0.01 to p=0.10). Similarly, there are still consistent statistically significant correlations between Satisfaction with Life and all the antecedents. In contrast, the correlation between Satisfaction with Life and RBSE strengthened significantly (p=0.01) while the other two cognitive-motivational states showed stronger, positive correlations than at Time 1 but they were not significant. With respect to performance outcomes, the general pattern of statistical correlation with antecedents was the same at Time 2 as at Time 1. However, whereas at Time 1 only one of the nine dyads between Locus of Control, Perceived Organizational Support and Work Control with performance outcomes showed statistically significant correlations, at Time 2 five dyads were significantly correlated. Similarly, Task Performance maintained a positive (but statistically weaker correlation with the three cognitive-motivational states compared to Time 1. In contrast, FRO Customer showed a very significant increase (p=0.01) with both Proactive and Customer Performance at Time 2 compared to Time 1. Finally, the two TSSE variables (Make Appointment – Hard and Ask for Business – Hard) that were introduced at Time 2 showed strong correlations with affective outcomes and weak, positive correlations with performance outcomes.

Table 4

Correlations between Antecedents, Cognitive Motivational States and Post-Intervention Survey Outcomes (N=56)

| | Work Engagement | Satisfaction with Life | Task Performance | Proactive Performance | Customer Performance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conscientiousness (Pre only) | .44** | .21 | .26 X | .14 | .12 |
| Agreeableness (Pre only) | .49** | .33* | .19 | .14 | .40** |
| Neuroticism (Pre only) | -.17 | -.40** | -.24 X | -.37** | -.29* |
| General Self-Efficacy (Post) | .51** | .48** | .44** | .34* | .45** |
| Self Esteem (Post) | .38** | .35** | .38** | .26 X | .31* |
| Locus of Control (Post) | .48** | .52** | .21 | .31* | .33* |
| Perceived Organizational Support (Post) | .49** | .50* | .23 X | .20 | .28* |
| Job Stress (Anxiety) (Post) | -.39** | -.50** | -.15 | -.13 | -.15 |
| Work Control (Pre only) | .35* | .44** | .06 | .32* | .32* |
| Organizational Understanding (Pre only) | .36** | .17 | .34* | .27 | .20 |
| Role Breadth Self Efficacy (Post) | .56** | .47** | .25 | .22 | .29* |
| Flexible Role Orientation –Customer (Post) | .25 X | .22 | .19 | .37** | .50*** |
| Flexible Role Orientation –Colleague (Post) | .26 X | .12 | .08 | .36** | .35** |
| Make Appointment – Hard (Post only) | .38** | .21 X | .16 | .21 | .14 |
| Ask for Business – Hard (Post only) | .36** | .34** | .00 | .09 | .16 |

****Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). X Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).**

With respect to the relationships between the antecedents, cognitive motivational states and behavioural or compliance outcomes at Time 1, no significant correlations occurred. In contrast, a number of statistically significant relationships occurred at Time 2 between the antecedents, cognitive motivational states and behavioural or compliance outcomes. First, a single antecedent (General Self-Efficacy) was found to be positively correlated with Appointments Made (.38, sig. at 0.05 level) and Products Sold (.47, sig at 0.01 level). Second, given the overall dampening effect on statistical significance due to fewer respondents, it is noteworthy that inter-correlations for the nine cognitive-motivational states and behavioural/compliance dyads ranged from +0.20 to +0.39 at Time 2 compared to a range of -.09 to +0.11 at Time 1 with three of the dyads significant at the 0.05 level and two of the dyads significant at the 0.10 level (See Table 3). Third, the two TSSE variables (Make Appointment – Hard and Ask for Business – Hard) showed strong correlations (p=0.01) with Appointments Made and Products Sold behavioural outcomes respectively and positive correlations with the other behavioural outcome dyads. Therefore, the intervention appeared to have a significant, positive influence on cognitive-motivational states that in turn led to stronger behavioural and compliance performance.

Table 5

Correlations between Cognitive Motivational States and Behavioural and Compliance Outcomes (N=36)

| | Appointments Made | Products Sold | Contacts |
|---|---|---|---|
| Role Breadth Self Efficacy (Post) | .22 | .24 | .20 |
| Flexible Role Orientation –Customer (Post) | .36* | .26 | .31 X |
| Flexible Role Orientation –Colleague (Post) | .39* | .31 X | .34* |
| Make Appointment – Hard (Post only) | .41** | .31 X | .12 |
| Ask for Business – Hard (Post only) | .25 | .45** | .22 |

****Sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Sig. at 0.05 level (2-tailed). X Sig. at 0.10 level (2-tailed).**

STANDARD REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Having established the model's underlying validity at two different time points, we next turn to which antecedents have a predictive influence on behavioural outcomes (See Table 6). With respect to the first behavioural outcome (Appointments Made), Perceived Organizational Support had a negative (β=-.29, p=0.05) predictive effect at Time 1 and no intrapersonal or organizational antecedent had a positive or negative effect at Time 2. However, at both Time 1 and Time 2, the Supervisor job classification made more appointments (T1 - β=.25, p=0.10 and T2 - β=.37, p=0.01) than either Managers or Frontline employees, suggesting that role was the most important factor. In total, the adjusted $R^2$ at T1 was .08 (p=0.05) and the adjusted $R^2$ at T2 was .10 (p=0.05). With respect to the second behavioural outcome (Products Sold), there was no predictor antecedent at Time 1. At Time 2, the Supervisor job classification sold significantly more products (β=.55, p=0.00, Adjusted $R^2$ of .28) than either Managers or Frontline employees, suggesting again that role was the single most important factor. However, when intrapersonal and organizational antecedents were assessed, including both General Self-Efficacy (β=.50, p=0.00) and Locus of Control (β=-.32, p=0.10) improved the model fit significantly (Adjusted $R^2$ = .41, an improvement of .13). Finally, when cognitive-motivational states were taken into account, Asking for Business (Hard) was significant (β=.26, p=0.10) and improved model fit by an additional .04 (Adjusted $R^2$ =.45). Therefore, the best fit model of Job Classification, General Self-Efficacy, Locus of Control and Asking for Business (Hard) predicted 45% of the variance in Products Sold at Time 2.

Table 6

Antecedents and Mediators of Behavioural Outcomes

| Outcome | Model | Antecedent/Mediator | Std Beta | Sig. | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Change in $R^2$ | Sig. F Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Appointments Made T1 | 1 | Job - Supervisor | .18 | .21 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .06 | .02 | | |
| | 2 | Job - Supervisor | .25* | .08 | | | | |
| | | Perceived Organizational Support | -.29* | .05 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .13 | .08 | .07** | .05 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Appointments Made T2 | 1 | Job - Supervisor | .37*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .13 | .10 | | .03 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Products Sold T1 | | NO PREDICTORS | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Products Sold T2 | 1 | Job - Supervisor | .55*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .30 | .28 | | |
| | 2 | Job - Supervisor | .53*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .50*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Locus of Control | -.32* | .07 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .46 | .41 | .13** | .02 |
| | 3 | Job - Supervisor | .46*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .40** | .02 | | | | |
| | | Locus of Control | -.25 | .15 | | | | |
| | | Ask for Business (Hard) | .26* | .07 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .52 | .45 | .05* | .07 |

*** p ≤ .01 level, ** p ≤ .05 level, *p ≤ .10 level.

With respect to affective outcomes (See Table 7), Agreeableness, Perceived Organizational Support, FRO Customer and RBSE all acted as predictors of Work Engagement at Time 1. The model fit including the antecedent variables of Agreeableness (β=.33, p=0.00) and Perceived Organizational Support (β=.43, p=0.00) yielding an Adjusted $R^2$ of .36. When RBSE (β=.40, p=0.00) and FRO Customer (β=.21, p=0.01) were added to the model, Agreeableness (β=.27, p=0.00) and Perceived Organizational Support (β=.25, p=0.01) remained highly significant. The final Adjusted $R^2$ value was .56 (p=0.00) was an increase of .20 over the first model which demonstrated that the two cognitive-motivational variables acted as significant mediators. At Time 2, a very similar pattern of antecedents and outcomes emerged with the main difference being that the cognitive-motivational variable Ask for Business (Hard) replaced FRO Customer as a mediator of the antecedent/outcome relationship. The initial model fit at Time 2 included the same antecedent variables of Agreeableness (β=.35, p=0.00) and Perceived Organizational Support (β=.28, p=0.05) as at Time 1 plus the addition of General Self-Efficacy (β=.33, p=0.01) that yielded an Adjusted $R^2$ of .43. When cognitive-motivational variables were assessed, RBSE (β=.23, p=0.10) and Ask for Business (Hard) (β=.20, p=0.10) were significant mediators while Agreeableness (β=.33, p=0.01) and Perceived Organizational Support (β=.25, p=0.05) remained highly significant. However, General Self-Efficacy was no longer significant. The final Adjusted $R^2$ value was .52 (p=0.00) was an increase of .09 over the first model which demonstrated that the two cognitive-motivational variables acted as significant mediators.

With respect to the affective outcome Satisfaction with Life, the initial model fit at Time 1 included General Self-Efficacy (β=.29, p=0.05) and Locus of Control (β=.28, p=0.01) yielding an Adjusted $R^2$ of .26. In addition, the inclusion of FRO Customer (β=-.22, p=0.05) and RBSE (β=.12, p=0.25) only improved model fit by .03. Similarly at Time 2, General Self-Efficacy (β=.25, p=0.10) and Locus of Control (β=.34, p=0.05) yielded an Adjusted $R^2$ of .34. The only cognitive-motivational variable to have a significant impact on model fit was RBSE (β=.25, p=0.05) which in turn caused General Self-Efficacy to become insignificant. Overall, the addition of RBSE only improved model fit by .04.

Table 7

Antecedents and Mediators of Affective Outcomes

| Outcome | Model | Antecedent/Mediator | Std Beta | Sig. | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Change in $R^2$ | Sig. F Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Engagement T1 | 1 | Job - Supervisor | .20** | .03 | | | | |
| | | Agreeableness | .33*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Perceived Organizational Support | .43*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .39 | .36 | | |
| | 2 | Job - Supervisor | .10 | .20 | | | | |
| | | Agreeableness | .27*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Perceived Organizational Support | .25*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Role Breadth Self-Efficacy | .40*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | FRO Customer | .21*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .59 | .56 | .20*** | .00 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Engagement T2 | 1 | Agreeableness | .49*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .33*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | Perceived Organizational Support | .28** | .02 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .47 | .43 | | |
| | 2 | Agreeableness | .33*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .18 | .13 | | | | |
| | | Perceived Organizational Support | .25** | .03 | | | | |
| | | Role Breadth Self-Efficacy | .23*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Ask for Business Hard | .20* | .08 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .57 | .52 | .10*** | .01 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction with Life T1 | 1 | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .29** | .02 | | | | |
| | | Locus of Control | .28*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .29 | .26 | | |
| | 2 | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .35*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | Locus of Control | .28*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | Role Breadth Self-Efficacy | .12 | .23 | | | | |
| | | FRO Customer | -.22** | .03 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .33 | .29 | .04* | .07 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction with Life T2 | 1 | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .25* | .07 | | | | |
| | | Locus of Control | .34** | .02 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .38 | .34 | | |
| | 2 | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .17 | .22 | | | | |
| | | Locus of Control | .28* | .06 | | | | |
| | | Role Breadth Self-Efficacy | .25* | .06 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .43 | .38 | .05* | .06 |

*** $p \leq .01$ level, ** $p \leq .05$ level, *$p \leq .10$ level.

Finally, a number of variables acted as antecedents of performance outcomes. With respect to Customer Performance, at Time 1 Agreeableness (β=.32, p=0.01) and General Self-Efficacy (β=.24, p=0.05) created a model fit with an Adjusted $R^2$ of .19. The addition of RBSE (β=.23, p=0.05) and FRO Colleague (β=.19, p=0.10) improved model fit by .08 and eliminated General Self-Efficacy as an outcome predictor. At Time 2, a similar pattern emerged with Agreeableness (β=.31, p=0.05) and General Self-Efficacy (β=.38, p=0.01) creating a model fit with an Adjusted $R^2$ of .27. However, FRO Customer (β=.35, p=0.01) was the only cognitive-motivational variable to improve model fit by an additional Adjusted $R^2$ of .10 while General Self-Efficacy remained a significant outcome predictor.

With respect to Proactive Performance, Neuroticism (T1 β=-.31, p=0.01 and T2 β=-.37, p=0.01) was the only antecedent variable to predict outcomes at both Time 1 and Time 2 with Adjusted $R^2$ of .09 and .12 respectively. Similarly, FRO Colleague (T1 β=.32, p=0.01 and T2 β=.34, p=0.01) was the only cognitive-motivational variable to act as a mediator of the

antecedent/outcome relationship. The change in Adjusted $R^2$ was .09 (p= 0.01) at Time 1 and .10 (p= 0.05) at Time 2. With respect to Task Performance, Conscientiousness (β=.34, p=0.00), Neuroticism (β=-151, p=0.10) and Organization Understanding (β=.30, p=0.01) all helped to predict outcomes at Time 1 with an Adjusted $R^2$ of .31. However at Time 2, they were replaced by General Self-Efficacy (β=.40, p=0.01) and Perspective Taking (β=.23, p=0.10) with an Adjusted $R^2$ was .22 (p=0.10) (N.B. the latter variable was only measured at Time 2). None of the cognitive-motivational variables acted as mediators of task performance. Finally, with respect to Compliance Outcomes (Contacts), none of the antecedents or cognitive-motivational states acted as predictors of any form of performance. In summary, a range of intrapersonal and organizational variables had differential effects as antecedents on performance outcomes with cognitive-motivational variables acting as mediators on numerous occasions.

Table 8

Antecedents and Mediators of Performance Outcomes

| Outcome | Model | Antecedent/Mediator | Std Beta | Sig. | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Change in $R^2$ | Sig. F Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Customer Performance T1 | 1 | Agreeableness | .32*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .24** | .02 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .20 | .19 | | |
| | 2 | Agreeableness | .34*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .10 | .35 | | | | |
| | | Role Breadth Self-Efficacy | .23** | .02 | | | | |
| | | FRO Colleague | .19* | .06 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .30 | .27 | .10*** | .00 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Customer Performance T2 | 1 | Agreeableness | .31** | .02 | | | | |
| | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .38*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .30 | .37 | | |
| | 2 | Agreeableness | .28** | .02 | | | | |
| | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .29** | .02 | | | | |
| | | FRO Customer | .35*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .41 | .37 | .11*** | .01 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Proactive Performance T1 | 1 | Neuroticism | -.31*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .09 | .09 | | |
| | 2 | Neuroticism | -.31*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | FRO Colleague | .32*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .19 | .18 | .10*** | .00 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Proactive Performance T2 | 1 | Neuroticism | -.37*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .14 | .12 | | |
| | 2 | Neuroticism | -.34*** | .01 | | | | |
| | | FRO Colleague | .32** | .02 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .24 | .21 | .10** | .02 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Task Performance T1 | 1 | Neuroticism | -.15* | .10 | | | | |
| | | Conscientiousness | .34*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Organizational Understanding | .30*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .33 | .31 | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Task Performance T2 | | Generalized Self-Efficacy | .40*** | .00 | | | | |
| | | Perspective Taking | .23* | .06 | | | | |
| | | MODEL SUMMARY | | | .24 | .22 | | |

*** p ≤ .01 level, ** p ≤ .05 level, *p ≤ .10 level.

HIERARCHICAL REGRESSSION

We now turn to ascertaining the mediating influence of the post-intervention cognitive-motivational states on post-intervention outcomes by first taking into account pre-intervention outcomes. This stringent test will show the additional outcome variance that can be explained purely by cognitive-motivational states. We first conducted a straight regression of the cognitive-motivational variables on performance outcomes to see which of them (if any) had a mediating influence. We then conducted a hierarchical regression with the cognitive-motivational variables to see what additional variance they explained.

With respect to Appointments Made, at Time 1 none of the cognitive-motivational variables were significant predictors (N.B. Make Appointments (Hard) was only measured at Time 2). Therefore, we could not conduct a hierarchical regression using Time 1 variables. Table 9 shows the results of both the straight and hierarchical regressions at Time 2. The best fit straight regression model of the cognitive-motivational variables showed an Adjusted $R^2$ of .20 (Sig. F Change=0.03) with Make Appointments (Hard) having a β value of .34 (p=.06). The best fit hierarchical regression model showed a Change in $R^2$ of .16 (p=0.04) at Step 2 with Make Appointments (Hard) having a β value of .29 (p=.04).

Table 9

Results of regression analysis of Cognitive Motivational States (Cog-Mot predictors) predicting Performance - Appointments Made at Time 2 (N=36)

| | | Straight Regression | | Hierarchical Regression Controlling for Performance @ T1 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | Variable | β | Sig | β Step 1 | Sig | β Step 2 | Sig |
| N.A. | Make Appointments (Hard) | .34 | .06* | | | | |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Customer | .26 | .26 | | | | |
| | Proactive Customer RBSE | .07 | .67 | | | | |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Colleague | .12 | .60 | | | | |
| | $R^2$ | .29 | | | | | |
| | Adjusted $R^2$ | .20 | | | | | |
| | Sig. F Change | | .03** | | | | |
| 1 | Appointments Made (Pre) | | | .65 | .00*** | .57 | .00*** |
| 2 | Make Appointments (Hard) | | | | | .29 | .04** |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Customer | | | | | .09 | .61 |
| | Proactive Customer RBSE | | | | | .08 | .56 |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Colleague | | | | | .13 | .49 |
| | $R^2$ | | | .43 | | .59 | |
| | Adjusted $R^2$ | | | .41 | | .52 | |
| | Change in $R^2$ | | | | | .16** | .04** |

*** p ≤ .01 level, ** p ≤ .05 level, *p ≤ .10 level. N.B. Pre = Mean of Q4 and Q5; Post = Mean of Q7 and Q8.

With respect to Products Sold, at Time 1 none of the cognitive-motivational variables were significant predictors (N.B. Ask for Business (Hard) was only measured at Time 2). Therefore, we could not conduct a hierarchical regression using Time 1 variables. Table 10 shows the results of both the straight and hierarchical regressions at Time 2. The best fit straight regression model of the cognitive-motivational variables showed an Adjusted $R^2$ of

.25 (Sig. F Change=0.01) with Ask for Business (Hard) having a β value of .44 (p=.01). The best fit hierarchical regression model showed a Change in $R^2$ of .28 (p=0.01) at Step 2 with Ask for Business (Hard) having a β value of .39 (p=.01).

Table 10

Results of regression analysis of Cognitive Motivational States (Cog-Mot predictors) predicting Performance – Products Sold at Time 2 (N=36)

| | | Straight Regression | | Hierarchical Regression Controlling for Performance @ T1 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | Variable | β | Sig | β Step 1 | Sig | β Step 2 | Sig |
| N.A. | Ask for Business (Hard) | .44 | .01*** | | | | |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Customer | .13 | .55 | | | | |
| | Proactive Customer RBSE | .12 | .45 | | | | |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Colleague | .19 | .38 | | | | |
| | $R^2$ | .34 | | | | | |
| | Adjusted $R^2$ | .25 | | | | | |
| | Sig. F Change | | .01*** | | | | |
| 1 | Products Sold (Pre) | | | .47 | | .40 | .01*** |
| 2 | Ask for Business (Hard) | | | | | .39 | .01*** |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Customer | | | | | .04 | .85 |
| | Proactive Customer RBSE | | | | | .12 | .39 |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Colleague | | | | | .24 | .22 |
| | $R^2$ | | | .22 | | .49 | |
| | Adjusted $R^2$ | | | .20 | | .41 | |
| | Change in $R^2$ | | | | | .28*** | .01*** |

*** p ≤ .01 level, ** p ≤ .05 level, *p ≤ .10 level. N.B. Pre = Mean of Q4 and Q5; Post = Mean of Q7 and Q8.

With respect to Proactive, Task and Customer Performance, at Time 1 none of the cognitive-motivational variables were significant predictors (N.B. Both Ask for Business (Hard) and Make Appointments (Hard) were only measured at Time 2). Therefore, we could not conduct hierarchical regressions using Time 1 variables. Table 11 shows the incremental model fit improvement for the performance outcomes at Time 2 after accounting for these values at Time 1. Both FRO Customer (β=.19, p=0.10) and Tenure- 20 years plus (β=-.25, p=0.05) improved model fit for Proactive Performance at Time 2 with a Change in $R^2$ of .09 (p=0.05). With respect to Task Performance, FRO Colleague (β=-.34, p=0.05) and Making Appointments (Hard) (β=.20, p=0.10) improved model fit at Time 2 with a Change in $R^2$ of .14 (p=0.05). Finally, only Tenure at two points (Under one year (β=.21, p=0.10) and 10 to 20 years (β=.18, p=0.10)) significantly improved model fit for Customer Performance. However, the overall best fit model included three of the cognitive-motivational variables (FRO Customer, RBSE and Ask for Business (Hard) and in total had a Change in $R^2$ of .19 (p=0.05).

Table 11

Results of hierarchical regression analysis predicting Performance - Proactive, Task, Customer @ T2 holding controlling for each at T1

| | | **Proactive @T2 Controlling Proactive @ T1 (N=50)** | | **Task @T2 Controlling Task @T1 (N=50)** | | **Customer @T2 Controlling Customer @ T1 (N=48)** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | Variable | β Step 1 | β Step 2 | β Step 1 | β Step 2 | β Step 1 | β Step 2 |
| 1 | Proactive Performance T1 | .69*** | .59*** | | | | |
| 2 | Flexible Role Orientation Customer | | .19* | | | | |
| | Tenure – 20 Years plus | | -.25** | | | | |
| 1 | Task Performance T1 | | | .54*** | .59*** | | |
| 2 | Flexible Role Orientation Colleague | | | | -.34** | | |
| | Making Appointments (Hard) TSSE | | | | .20* | | |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Customer | | | | .22 | | |
| | Tenure – 20 Years plus | | | | -.17 | | |
| 1 | Customer Performance T1 | | | | | .61*** | .51*** |
| 2 | Tenure – Less than 1 Year | | | | | | .21* |
| | Tenure – 10 to 20 Years | | | | | | .18* |
| | Tenure – 20 Years plus | | | | | | -.15 |
| | Flexible Role Orientation Customer | | | | | | .17 |
| | Proactive Customer RBSE | | | | | | .14 |
| | Ask for Business (Hard) TSSE | | | | | | .13 |
| | $R^2$ | .48 | .56 | .29 | .43 | .37 | .56 |
| | Adjusted $R^2$ | .46 | .53 | .28 | .36 | .36 | .49 |
| | Change in $R^2$ | | .09** | | .14** | | .19** |

*** $p \leq .01$ level, ** $p \leq .05$ level, *$p \leq .10$ level.

With respect to Engagement and its three sub-scales of Absorption, Vigour and Dedication, Table 12 sets out the results. The only factor to improve model fit at Time 2 when Time 1 was taken into account was Job Classification (i.e. Supervisor and Manager) with none of the cognitive-motivational variables making a significant contribution. Overall, taking into account job classification led to an average Change in $R^2$ of .10 (p=0.10). However, when RBSE at Time 2 was included in Step 2 of the regression, it had a very significant impact on improving model fit with a range of β values from .30 to .41 (all sig. = 0.01). In addition, the Supervisor Job Classification continued to contribute to improved model fit with a range of β values from .19 to .25 (sig. = 0.05 or 0.10). Therefore when RBSE at Time 2 and Job Classification are taken into account, the Change in $R^2$ improved by a range of .17 to .23 (all sig. = 0.01).

Table 12

Results of hierarchical regression analysis predicting Performance –

Work Engagement, Absorption, Dedication and Vigour @ T2 controlling for Same Variable @T1

| | | **Engagement** | | **Absorption** | | **Dedication** | | **Vigour** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | Variables | β Step 1 | β Step 2 | β Step 1 | β Step 2 | β Step 1 | β Step 2 | β Step 1 | β Step 2 |
| | Cog-Mot Predictors @ T2 | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Engage/Absorb/Dedicate/Vigour | .56*** | .38*** | .59*** | .49*** | .53*** | .36*** | .51*** | .39*** |
| | Proactive Customer RBSE | | .39*** | | .38*** | | .41*** | | .30** |
| 2 | Job - Supervisor | | .23** | | .20* | | .19* | | .25** |
| | Job - Manager | | .17 | | .16 | | .17 | | .12 |
| | $R^2$ | .32 | .54 | .35 | .57 | .28 | .51 | .26 | .43 |
| | Adjusted $R^2$ | .30 | .50 | .33 | .53 | .26 | .46 | .25 | .38 |
| | Change in $R^2$ | | .23*** | | .22*** | | .23*** | | .17*** |
| | Cog-Mot Predictors @ T1 | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Engage/Absorb/Dedicate/Vigour | .55*** | .45*** | .57*** | .46*** | .51*** | .45*** | .51*** | .41*** |
| | Proactive Customer RBSE | | .10 | | .14 | | .06 | | .15 |
| 2 | Job - Supervisor | | .28** | | .26** | | .25* | | .26** |
| | Job - Manager | | .22* | | .23* | | .24* | | .14 |
| | $R^2$ | .30 | .41 | .32 | .43 | .26 | .35 | .26 | .36 |
| | Adjusted $R^2$ | .29 | .35 | .31 | .38 | .24 | .29 | .25 | .30 |
| | Change in $R^2$ | | .10* | | .11* | | .09 | | .10* |

*** p ≤ .01 level, ** p ≤ .05 level, *p ≤ .10 level.

Satisfaction with Life followed a very similar pattern to Engagement (See Table 13). RBSE was a significant predictor of Satisfaction with Life at both Time 1 (β=.26, p=0.05) and Time 2 β=.43, p=0.01) using standard regression analysis. Both RBSE and the Supervisor Job Classification improved model fit when Satisfaction with Life at Time 1 was taken into account in predicting Satisfaction with Life at Time 2 with a Change in $R^2$ of .08 (p=0.05).

Table 13

Results of regression analysis predicting Performance - Satisfaction with Life

| | Std. Regression Time 1 | | Std. Regression Time 2 | | | Hierarchical Regression Controlling for Performance @ T1 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | β | Sig | β | Sig | Step | Variables | β Step 1 | β Step 2 |
| Flexible Role Orientation Customer | -.14 | .28 | .22 | .17 | 1 | Life Satisfaction | .69*** | .62*** |
| Proactive Customer RBSE | .26 | .02** | .43 | .01*** | | Proactive Customer RBSE | | .21* |
| Flexible Role Orientation Colleague | .06 | .65 | -.16 | .33 | 2 | Job - Supervisor | | .17* |
| $R^2$ | .07 | | .21 | | | $R^2$ | .48 | .56 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | .04 | | .17 | | | Adjusted $R^2$ | .46 | .53 |
| Sig. F Change | | .10* | | .01*** | | Change in $R^2$ | | .08** |

*** p ≤ .01 level, ** p ≤ .05 level, *p ≤ .10 level.

## DISCUSSION

Employee confidence in their competence to undertake challenging tasks and achieve personal and organizational objectives has long been recognized as an important individual characteristic that is directly applicable to the workplace (Bandura, 1997; Spreitzer, 1996; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; White, 1959). Indeed, the influence of confidence on individual behaviour in particular has seen a recent resurgence with the theoretical exposition of Core Confidence (Stajkovic, 2006) and Positive Psychological Capital (Luthans et al., 2007) as higher order, work motivation constructs. Both theories propose that this higher order construct is manifested in four ways (self-efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism) and can be treated as a single, higher order factor. Core confidence and its four manifestations are influenced by a combination of internal and external factors (Luthans et al., 2007) and can be thought of as malleable, state-like beliefs applied to a particular area of functioning that also act as more stable, trait like beliefs that may generalize to other domains (Stajkovic, 2006). Therefore, employee confidence is both an individual characteristic and process that is influenced by a combination of personal and environmental factors and can change over time. As a consequence, it is critical for management scholars to understand how individual and group characteristics as well as organizational processes and practices either support or undermine employee confidence. This study is a step in that direction.

The results highlight that a number of antecedents affect behavioral, affective, compliance and attitudinal outcomes while cognitive motivational states frequently act as mediators in the antecedent/outcome relationship. With respect to the first behavioral outcome (Number of Appointments Made), Perceived Organizational Support was the one antecedent to act as a predictor and it was a relatively weak, negative impact that occurred at Time 1 only. With respect to the second behavioral outcome (Number of Products Sold), General Self-Efficacy (GSE) was the one antecedent to act as a predictor once cognitive motivational states were taken into account and it was a strong, positive impact that occurred at Time 2 only.

Therefore, this study suggests that using intrapersonal and organizational variables to predict behavior is unlikely to yield significant help.

However, unlike these antecedents, cognitive-motivational states do help to predict employee performance. The TSSE measure Making Appointments (Hard) had a very strong positive impact on predicting the Number of Appointments Made by employees at Time 2 after taking into account the Number of Appointments Made at Time 1. No other cognitive-motivational state had any impact. Similarly, The TSSE measure Asking for Business (Hard) had a very strong positive impact on predicting the Number of Products Sold by employees at Time 2 after taking into account the Number of Products Sold at Time 1. Another cognitive-motivational state (FRO Customer) also had helped to predict the Number of Products Sold. Overall, the Number of Products Sold at Time 2 was equally predicted by four factors: Asking for Business (Hard); Job Classification (Supervisor); FRO Customer; and Number of Products Sold at Time 1. Although it is not possible to tell whether or not the intervention had any direct impact on these outcomes at Time 2 as they weren't measured at Time 1, the Second Order Factor Pattern Matrix (Table 2) and Cognitive-Motivational State Correlations (Table 5) highlight the strong relationship between these TSSE variables and RBSE in particular. Finally, as the number of respondents who's behavioral data could also be assessed was only 36, the positive correlations between the different cognitive-motivational states suggests that they play a more important role in predicting behavioral performance than intrapersonal or organizational variables. In summary, cognitive-motivational states play a very important role in predicting behavioral performance.

With respect to the major affective outcome (Work Engagement), the antecedents Agreeableness and Perceived Organizational Support acted as very strong predictors at both Time 1 and 2. With respect to cognitive-motivational states, RBSE had a strong impact on predicting Work Engagement at both Times 1 and 2, while FRO Customer and Ask for Business (Hard) significantly improved model fit. Although GSE initially acted as a

significant outcome predictor at Time 2, it was partially mediated by RBSE. Given that Agreeableness is a personality trait that organizations have no real control over, it is very clear that helping employees to feel cared for and building confidence in the proactive, more challenging tasks they face in their roles is essential for organizations to lift Work Engagement scores meaningfully. Indeed, these two variables alone (Perceived Organizational Support and RBSE) have an Adjusted $R^2$ value over 40%. With respect to the second affective outcome (Satisfaction with Life), General Self-Efficacy (GSE) and Locus of Control both acted as significant initial predictors and interestingly totally mediated the significant negative impact from Neuroticism. As far as cognitive-motivational states are concerned, FRO Customer had an incremental, negative influence on Satisfaction with Life at Time 1. However at Time 2, RBSE partially mediated GSE while leaving LOC as a significant predictor of Satisfaction with Life. Given that there has been a relative increase in Satisfaction with Life at Time 2, it appears that the intervention had a positive impact. Although Locus of Control is an important antecedent of Satisfaction with Life, organizations have very limited control over this variable. Nevertheless, organizations can have a significant impact on employees Satisfaction with Life by helping them build confidence in their RBSE.

As far a compliance outcomes are concerned, none of the antecedents acted as a predictor nor did any of the cognitive-motivational states demonstrate any mediating influence. This finding is not surprising as there was very limited degree of discretion involved or proactivity required in fulfilling compliance requirements. Finally, with respect to attitude (customer, proactive and task performance) outcomes, the findings were generally consistent across both Time 1 and Time 2, suggesting that the intervention had limited impact on these outcomes. This finding is not surprising as the intervention was designed to increase RBSE and any change in performance outcome would have been an un-expected by-product. The only exception appears to have been customer performance where FRO Customer added significantly to improving the model at Time 2 whereas at Time 1 it had no influence. Of the

different potential antecedents, Neuroticism consistently showed up as having a negative impact across all three performance outcomes while agreeableness was a positive predictor of customer performance and conscientiousness was a positive predictor of task performance. GSE acted as an antecedent for customer performance at Time 1 (but this was mediated by RBSE and FRO Colleague) as well as for task performance at Time 2.

The overall picture to emerge from this study is that cognitive-motivational states clearly act as important mediators and predictors in their own right of a range of outcomes. TSSE was the single most influential factor in determining behavioral outcomes while RBSE was the single most influential factor in affective outcomes. The least influential cognitive-motivational factor were the two FRO factors which only acted as secondary influences of the Work Engagement Sub-scales and Customer Performance after RBSE. Although personality differences do have some influence on outcomes, other than adjusting recruitment and selection policies, there is not much an organization can do in this regard. On the other hand, introducing work-related interventions to improve employee RBSE, TSSE and FRO will lead to a positive influence on a range of outcomes. In short, organizations can make a difference in outcomes.

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# Part 5 – Field Experiment Materials Appendices

## Appendix XI – Research Proposal for Host Organisation

# Research Proposal for Host Organisation

# "An investigation into improving frontline employee motivation, engagement and customer service skills through self-efficacy training"

**Research conducted by:**

**Richard Carter, MGSM Doctoral Student**

**Research co-supervised by:**

**Professor Richard Badham, MGSM and Dr Paul Nesbitt, MGSM**

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## Overview

Attracting, retaining and motivating front-line employees continue to be hot topics for Australian organisations. Indeed, employee motivation was nominated by AFR Boss magazine as the Number 1 big issue for organisations in 2006. Therefore, there is clearly a need for new strategies to increase work motivation and improve employee retention. In particular, strategies that help front line employees develop better customer service skills and provide superior customer service are critical given the intense competitive environment many service and retail businesses operate within.

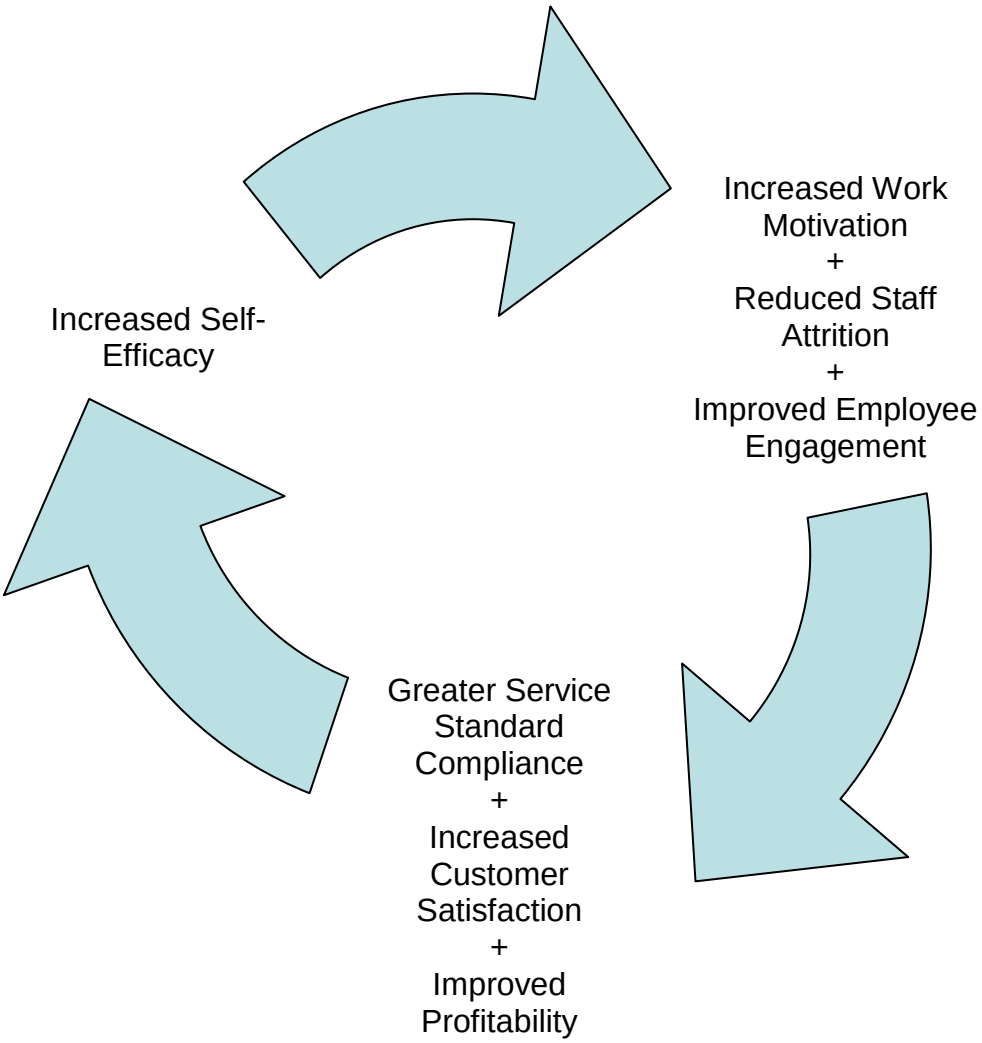
Although there has been significant academic research undertaken on work motivation with university students, there has been comparatively little 'real world' experimentation. One relatively untested employee motivation strategy in Australia is the use of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to orchestrate performance on a specific task. When an individual believes they have the skills, knowledge and ability to perform a task, they will be motivated to do so. Conversely, when an individual is unsure of their capabilities to undertake an activity and reach a goal, their motivation suffers.

The proposed research has been designed to address this shortcoming. The research starts by interviewing up to 15 frontline employees to identify the environmental factors (both personal and work related) that influence employee perceptions of their self-efficacy. A survey of 320 frontline employees will then be conducted to establish benchmarks of their self-efficacy and motivation. Half of the employees (160) will then attend two half day workshops designed to improve their customer service skills using self-efficacy principles and practices while the other half will act as a control group. Approximately three months later, a follow up survey of all 320 employees will be undertaken to see what change (if any) has occurred in their self-efficacy, work motivation and employee engagement.

The results will highlight the impact of the training program on frontline employee self-efficacy, work motivation and engagement. In addition to employee self-reports of self-efficacy and work motivation, a sample of employees will be mystery shopped as an independent measure of performance against the company's customer service standards. Finally, a survey of frontline employee supervisors will be conducted to measure their perceptions of changes in employee self-efficacy and work motivation. To the extent that the research demonstrates a positive link between employee self-efficacy, work motivation and customer service performance, the host organisation will directly benefit from supporting the research in both the short and long-term through increased employee motivation and retention and improved customer service.

The project will be undertaken by PhD candidate Richard Carter as the core research component of his dissertation. He will be supported by his co-supervisors, Professor Richard Badham and Dr Paul Nesbitt. The estimated cash cost for host organisations to participate is estimated to be a maximum of $20,000, principally to cover the cost of the training and mystery shopping. However, the actual cash cost should be significantly less when likely matching funding from Macquarie University and R&D tax incentives are taken into account. Two diagrams overleaf outline key aspects of the research followed by a more detailed outline of the research program.

## Diagram of Self-efficacy's Hypothesized Relationship with Employee Motivation and Profitability




## Proposed Research Timetable

| | Employee Interviews | First Survey | Training Intervention | Second Survey |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dates** | **1st Half 2007** | **2nd Half 2007** | **1st Half 2008** | **2nd Half 2008** |
| **Prospective payments due** | **$5,000 max 30/06/07** | **$5,000 max 30/11/07** | **$5,000 max 30/4/08** | **$5,000 max 30/9/08** |

## Resume for Principal Researcher - Richard Carter

Richard Carter has diverse experience as a manager, consultant, facilitator/trainer and academic. Richard's demonstrated capabilities include:

- ✓ High level communication (written and verbal) skills
- ✓ Strong relationship management, influencing and negotiation skills
- ✓ Sound business acumen and commercial judgement
- ✓ Proven ability to develop business unit and corporate strategy
- ✓ Ability to deal with high level of complexity and ambiguity

Richard is committed to improving organisational performance through people. He has outstanding interpersonal skills as well as high level abstract and critical thinking aptitudes.

**Manager/Executive**: Richard's experience includes senior management responsibilities with Didasko Ltd (Group Business Development Manager and General Manager NSW); Vox Retail Group (Head of Organisation Development & General Manager Marketing); and H.J. Heinz Australia (General Manager Operations Restaurant Division). Richard's career began in the restaurant industry where he gained valuable operational management experience.

**Consultant**: After completing his MBA, Richard worked for Price Waterhouse Urwick (PWU) where he led both the firm's Hospitality and Tourism and Strategic Advisory Services groups in Melbourne before starting his own professional practice. Consultancy projects include: strategic reviews, workshops and marketing plans; concept development and implementation; market research; expert witness; operational advice and reviews; feasibility studies; and customer satisfaction measurement. Clients include: Coles Myer Ltd (multiple assignments); Starbucks Coffee; Price Waterhouse; AMP; Foster's Brewing; and Woolworths Ltd.

**Facilitator/Trainer**: A natural extension of Richard's work as an academic and consultant was to act as an educational facilitator, trainer and mentor. He specializes in conducting "Open Space" sessions to help organisations build communication and trust with stakeholders. Richard has also undertaken executive mentoring; team facilitation; and service delivery process improvement; Clients include: Austotel Management; Vox Retail Group; Lend Lease and Tattersall's.

**Academic**: Richard taught both undergraduate and postgraduate students the subjects of Service Marketing and Managing People at the School of Marketing, UNSW for 8 years. He has had 5 articles published in international journals and presented 7 papers at international conferences. Richard was also actively involved in a range of institution building duties including serving as a National Executive member of the Australian Customer Service Association and chairperson for Gold Service 2000.

### ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS:

*Bachelor of Commerce (Honours)*
School of Hotel & Food Administration
University of Guelph, Ontario, CANADA

*Master of Business Administration*
Graduate School of Management
University of Melbourne, Victoria, AUSTRALIA
*Awarded CRA Prize (Business Strategy)

*Enrolled in PhD Program (Management)*
Macquarie Graduate School of Management
Macquarie University, New South Wales, AUSTRALIA
*APA Scholarship Holder

## Appendix XII – Qualitative Research Guidelines

Employee Interviews re: Factors Affecting Self-Efficacy

My name is Richard Carter and I'm a PhD student at Macquarie University. Your company has agreed to help with my research by allowing me to informally interview employees and undertake a series of service and sales training workshops later this year.

The main focus of the research is to develop a better understanding of the role of a concept called self-efficacy in employee attitudes, behaviour and performance. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to orchestrate performance on a specific task. When an individual believes they have the skills, knowledge and ability to perform a task, they will be motivated to do so. Conversely, when an individual is unsure of their capabilities to undertake an activity and reach a goal, their motivation suffers.

The purpose of this interview is to develop a better understanding of the work, personal and environmental factors that may be influencing an individual's self-efficacy at your company. Any information you provide is confidential and is being used by the researchers to develop a survey that will be used later this year by employees participating in the research project.

Are you willing to participate? Yes No

Name (For contact and record keeping purposes only)

Location (For contact purposes and record keeping purposes only)

Position:

F/T P/T Casual

Length of Employment:

Time in Current Role:

Previous work experience – Types of Jobs, Industries, Duration

What do you like about your job?

What do you dislike about your job?

How much and what type of training did you receive when you first started?

How much and what type of training have you received in the past 3 years?

How much has your role or expectations of your role changed in the past 3 years?

How well has the training you've received helped you to perform your job?

In what ways has the training you've received given you confidence to perform your job?

Are there any work factors that have limited your belief in your ability to do your job?

Any suggestions to increase your belief in your ability to perform your job effectively?

Overall, do you believe you have the skills, knowledge and ability to perform your role?

Technical

Sales

Service

To what extent to do you believe you have control over your work?

To what extent to do you believe you have the competence to perform your role?

To what extent do you believe that your work related efforts will lead to good outcomes? Effectiveness

Looking back on the role you perform at work and the belief or lack of belief you have in your ability to perform your role successfully, are there any outside work (family, school, church, friends) that you consider have been influential in this regard?

Family

School

Church

Friends

Media

Other

How do we form a belief that the self can successfully perform a particular action and that a given action will lead to a certain outcome?

## Appendix XIII – List of Survey Measures

### *(Authors, Year), Journal/Book*

1. Non-Controlling Supervision* (Oldham & Cummings, 1996), *Academy of Management Journal*

2. Job Stress* (Parker & Decotiis, 1983), *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*

3. Role Overload* (Bacharach, Bamberger & Conley, 1990), *Work and Occupations*

4. Perceived Organizational Support* (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson & Sowa, 1986), *Journal of Applied Psychology*

5. Work Control* (Dwyer & Ganster, 1991), *Journal of Organizational Behavior*

6. Self-Esteem [X] (Rosenberg, 1979), *Conceiving the Self*

7. Self-Categorization [X] (Ellemers, Kortekaas & Ouwerkerk, 1999), *European Journal of Social Psychology*

8. General Self-Efficacy [X] (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001), *Organizational Research Methods*

9. Abbreviated Big Five Inventory [X] (Rammstedt & John, 2007), *Journal of Research in Personality*

10. Locus of Control [X] (Lumpkin, 1985), *Psychological Reports*

11. Satisfaction with Life [X] (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), *Journal of Personality Assessment*

12. Flexible Role Orientation** (Parker, Williams & Turner, 2006), *Journal of Applied Psychology*

13. Role Performance** (Griffin, Neal & Parker, 2007), *Academy of Management Journal*

14. Employee Acting [X] (Grandey, 2003), *Academy of Management Journal*

15. Perspective Taking [X] (Axtell, Parker, Holman, Totterdell 2007), *European Journal of Work & Organizational Psychology*

16. Integrated Understanding [X] (Parker & Axtell, 2001), *Academy of Management Journal*

17. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale [X] (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006), *Educational and Psychological Measurement*

*Sourced from "Taking the Measure of Work: a guide to validated scales for organizational research and diagnosis" (Fields, 2002)

[X] Sourced from journal articles

** Original scales supplied by Professor Parker and modified for present study

## Appendix XIV – Bank S Employee Survey – Part 1 – Pre-intervention

You have been selected to participate in two employee surveys by Bank S. The survey is being conducted by Richard Carter, a researcher from Macquarie University in Sydney. Bank S has agreed to help by administering the surveys and undertaking a series of service and sales training workshops. If the workshops are successful, Bank S is keen to use the workshop findings throughout the bank.

The focus of the research is to develop a better understanding of some of the personal and workplace factors that have an impact on employee attitudes, behaviour and performance. The findings will be used to help improve your job satisfaction and customer service levels. All individual responses are confidential – Richard Carter is the only person who will ever see your individual survey. The results of the survey will only be available to Bank S in summary format in a way that no individual can be identified.

Name (For contact and record keeping purposes only) _____

Location (For contact and record keeping purposes only) _____

Branch Manager  Senior Customer Service Officer  Customer Service Officer

F/T  P/T

Length of time in job
Less than 1 year
Between 1 and 5 years
Between 6 and 10 years
Between 11 and 20 years
More than 20 years

We have tested the survey with Bank S employees and based on their experience we believe it should take approximately 20 minutes to fill in your responses. There are 17 sections and exactly 100 statements. The format for answering the statements is:

**PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL BE A REMINDER ABOUT THE SCORING FORMAT WHENEVER IT CHANGES**

Simply click on the number you believe **best represents your feelings**. In order to complete the survey comfortably within 20 minutes, don't think too much about your answers. For most people, the first number they think represents their feelings is the most accurate reflection of their feelings.

**<u>The first 5 sections generally concern your job and your work environment.</u>**

<u>Section 1</u>

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

1. My supervisor always seems to be around checking on my work
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. My supervisor tells me what shall be done and how it shall be done
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. My supervisor never gives me a chance to make important decisions on my own 1
   2 3 4 5 6 7

4. My supervisor leaves it up to me to decide how to go about doing my job
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

<u>Section 2</u>

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

5. I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. My job gets to me more than it should
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

<u>Section 3</u>

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

8. I don’t have time to finish my allocated tasks
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I’m rushed in doing my allocated tasks
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. I have a lot of free time on my hands
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

<u>Section 4</u>

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

11. Bank S cares about my opinions.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. Bank S shows very little concern for me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Bank S cares about my general satisfaction at work
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. Bank S really cares about my well being
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 5

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

15. I have a lot of control over the variety of methods I use in completing my work
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. I have choice over the variety of tasks I undertake 1
2 3 4 5 6 7

17. I personally have a lot of control over how much work I get done 1
2 3 4 5 6 7

18. Overall I have a lot of control over work and work-related matters 1
2 3 4 5 6 7

**The next 6 sections generally concern how you see yourself**

Section 6

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

19. I feel I have a number of good qualities
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. I am able to do things as well as most other people
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. I wish I could have more respect for myself
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. At times I think I am no good at all
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 7

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

23. I identify with other members of my branch
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. I am like other members of my branch
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. My branch is an important reflection of who I am
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 8

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

26. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. I believe I can succeed at most any endeavour to which I set my mind.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

32. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

33. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 9

**How do the following statements describe your personality?**

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

I see myself as someone who?

34. … is reserved 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

35. … is generally trusting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

36. … tends to be lazy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

37. … is relaxed, handles stress well
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

38. … has few artistic interests 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

39. … is outgoing, sociable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

40. … tends to find fault with others
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

41. … does a thorough job 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

42. … gets nervous easily 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

43. … has an active imagination 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

44. … is considerate and kind to almost everyone
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 10

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

45. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

46. Getting people to do the right things depends upon ability: luck has nothing to do with it.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

47. What happens to me is my own doing.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

48. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

49. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

50. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 11

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

51. In most ways my life is close to my ideal
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

52. The conditions of my life are excellent
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

53. I am satisfied with my life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

54. So far I have gotten the important thing I want in life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

55. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**The next 5 sections generally concerns customers**

**PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT SCORING FORMAT FOR NEXT SECTION**

Section 12

***The following questions are about problems that could occur in your branch.***
*Some of these problems might be of concern to you whereas other problems might not be of concern to you.*

**1 = definitely not my concern; 2 = might be my concern;**
**3 = somewhat my concern;**
**4 = probably my concern; 5 = definitely my concern**

56. A customer at your branch needs assistance
1 2 3 4 5

57. The quality of service in your branch is not as good as it could be
1 2 3 4 5

58. There is a lack of team-work within your branch
1 2 3 4 5

59. A customer who has previously dealt with your colleague needs help
1 2 3 4 5

60. Other employees in your branch are not developing new skills
1 2 3 4 5

61. Some colleagues in your branch are not pulling their weight
1 2 3 4 5

62. Different people in your branch are not co-ordinating their efforts.
1 2 3 4 5

63. Information from mystery shoppers suggests there is a poor quality service level in your branch
1 2 3 4 5

64. Customers in your branch are not receiving the information that they should be such as a Product Disclosure Statements
    1 2 3 4 5

65. Opportunities for sales to customers in your branch are not being pursued
    1 2 3 4 5

**PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT SCORING FORMAT FOR NEXT 4 SECTIONS**

Section 13

**How often over the past month have you:**

**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

66. Carried out the core activities of your job well
    1 2 3 4 5

67. Completed your core activities well following standard procedures
    1 2 3 4 5

68. Ensured all your activities were completed properly
    1 2 3 4 5

69. Initiated better ways of doing your core activities
    1 2 3 4 5

70. Come up with ideas to remove roadblocks and implement best practice in completing your core activities
    1 2 3 4 5

71. Made changes to the way your activities are done
    1 2 3 4 5

72. Anticipated issues or needs customers might have and developed solutions
    1 2 3 4 5

73. Taken the initiative to communicate client requirements to other service areas within the bank
    1 2 3 4 5

74. Checked with customers to verify that their expectations have been met or exceeded.
    1 2 3 4 5

75. Followed through with customer interactions to ensure a smooth transition to other service representatives
    1 2 3 4 5

Section 14

**When dealing with customers, to what extent do you:**

**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

76. Put on an act in order to deal with customers in an appropriate way?
1 2 3 4 5

77. Fake a good mood when interacting with customers?
1 2 3 4 5

78. Put on a 'show' or 'performance' when interacting with customers?
1 2 3 4 5

79. Just pretend to have the emotions you need to display for your job?
1 2 3 4 5

80. Try to actually experience the emotions you must show to customers?
1 2 3 4 5

81. Work hard to feel the emotions that you need to show to customers?
1 2 3 4 5

82. Make an effort to actually feel the emotions that you need to display towards customers?
1 2 3 4 5

Section 15

**When dealing with customers, to what extent do you:**

**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

83. Imagine how things look from their perspective? 1 2 3 4 5

84. Think about how you would feel in their situation? 1 2 3 4 5

85. Try to see things from their viewpoint? 1 2 3 4 5

86. Try to imagine yourself as a customer in a similar situation?
1 2 3 4 5

Section 16

**To what extent:**

**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

87. Do you understand how your work contributes to the overall work of the branch?
1 2 3 4 5

88. Could you explain to a customer all the key services carried out in your branch?
1 2 3 4 5

89. Do you understand how your branch as a whole works?
1 2 3 4 5

90. Do you learn things about the company as you do your work?
1 2 3 4 5

91. Could you explain to a customer all the key services carried out in Bank S?
1 2 3 4 5

**<u>The last section generally concerns how you feel at work</u>**

**<u>PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT SCORING FORMAT FOR LAST SECTION</u>**

<u>Section 17</u>

Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, cross the "0" (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you felt it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

| Never | Almost Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Never | A few times a year or less | Once a month | A few times or less a month | Once a week | A few times a week | Every day |

92. At my work, I feel like I am bursting with energy
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

93. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

94. I am enthusiastic about my job
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

95. My job inspires me
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

96. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

97. I feel happy when I am working intensely
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

98. I am proud of the work that I do
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

99. I am immersed in my work
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

100. I get carried away when I am working

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

## Appendix XV – Bank S Employee Survey – Part 2 – Pre-intervention

You have been selected to participate in two employee surveys by Bank SA. The survey is being conducted by Richard Carter, a researcher from Macquarie University in Sydney. Bank SA has agreed to help by administering the surveys and undertaking a series of service and sales training workshops. If the workshops are successful, Bank SA is keen to use the workshop findings throughout the bank.

The focus of the research is to develop a better understanding of some of the personal and workplace factors that have an impact on employee attitudes, behaviour and performance. The findings will be used to help improve your job satisfaction and customer service levels. All individual responses are confidential – Richard Carter is the only person who will ever see your individual survey. The results of the survey will only be available to Bank SA in summary format in a way that no individual can be identified.

Name (For contact and record keeping purposes only) _____

Location (For contact and record keeping purposes only) _____

We have tested the survey with Bank SA employees and based on their experience we believe it should take approximately 10 minutes to fill in your responses. The format for Part 2 of the survey and your responses is different to Part 1. There are 3 sections.

Section 1 is a practice part to help you become familiar with the way this part of the survey is to be completed. Section 2 has 3 separate parts depending on your job position. **You only need to provide responses to the statements for your position**. The number of questions in this section ranges from 21 for Customer Service Officers to 31 for Senior Customer Service Officers to 38 for Branch Managers. Finally, Section 3 is to be completed by everyone. There are 15 questions in this section.

The statements in the survey ask you to rate your degree of confidence on being able to perform a stated task. You can choose any number from 0 to 100 provided it is a multiple of 10. For example, putting '0' means you have no confidence in being able to undertake the stated task; putting '100' means you're highly certain you can do it; putting '30' means you're a little bit confident at doing it; and putting an '80' means you're pretty confident at undertaking the stated task. The practice section will give you an opportunity to become familiar with the way the scoring works. Simply put in a number from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) you believe best represents your feelings.

In order to complete the survey comfortably within 10 minutes, don't think too much about your answers. For most people, **the first number they think of from 0 to 100 that is a multiple of 10** best represents their degree of confidence in undertaking the stated task.

## SECTION 1 – Practice (Everyone to complete)

*To familiarize yourself with the survey, please complete this practice section first.*

If you were asked to lift objects of different weights **right now**, how certain are you that you can lift each of the weights described below?

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 using the scale given below:*

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot do at all** | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | | **Highly Certain can do** |

| ***Physical Strength*** | ***Confidence*** **(0-100)** |
|---|---|
| Lift a **5** kilo object | _____ |
| " **10** " " | _____ |
| " **20** " " | _____ |
| " **40** " " | _____ |
| " **70** " " | _____ |
| " **100** " " | _____ |

## CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

If you are very confident you can lift a 5 kilo object, your answer would look something like this: Lift a **5** kilo object 100

If you were pretty confident you could lift a 20 kilo object, your answer would look something like this: Lift a **20** kilo object 80

If you were only slightly confident you could lift a 50 kilo object, your answer would look something like this: Lift a **40** kilo object 30

If you weren't confident at all that you could lift a 100 kilo object, your answer would look something like this: Lift a **100** kilo object 0

## SECTION 2 - CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICER RESPONSES

**(21 questions – Skip this part of Section 2 if you are not a CSO)**

This questionnaire is designed to help us get a better understanding of the kinds of things that can be difficult for customer service officers. Please rate how certain you are that you can do each of the tasks described below by writing the appropriate number.

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 using the scale given below:*

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot do at all** | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | | **Highly Certain can do** |

**Confidence (0-100)**

### *Working at the Counter*

Acknowledge customers waiting in line _____

Provide a warm and friendly greeting to customers _____

Smile and make eye contact regularly while speaking with customers _____

Start a meaningful conversation with a customer during a routine transaction _____

Ask a customer an open-ended question when an opportunity arises _____

Ask customers to come in for a Profile during an over the counter transaction _____

Seek help from a colleague when you find it difficult to chat to customers _____

### *Profiling*

Access computer to commence profiling process _____

Lead the customer through the profiling process _____

Enter information about a customer's financial status _____

Identify potential areas for the bank to provide more financial services _____

Point out potential areas for customer to improve their banking _____

Make recommendations to customers based on their specific needs _____

Refer the customer to a product specialist when a specific need is identified _____

Ask the customer for their business where a clear need has been identified _____

### *Outbound Sales & Service*

Review and identify the list of customers to contact _____

Access database to obtain customer details _____

Establish contact with customers on list to make appointment _____

Communicate the benefit of the appointment to the customer _____

Ask customers to come in for an appointment _____

Call customers to re-confirm appointment _____

## SECTION 2 - SENIOR CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICER RESPONSES

**(31 questions – Skip this part of Section 2 if you are not a Senior CSO)**

This questionnaire is designed to help us get a better understanding of the kinds of things that can be difficult for senior customer service officers. Please rate how certain you are that you can do each of the tasks described below by writing the appropriate number.

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 using the scale given below:*

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot do at all** | | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | **Highly Certain can do** |

**Confidence (0-100)**

### *Supervisor Role*

Help CSO's undertake necessary tasks to reach targets _____

Motivate CSO's who show low interest in achieving targets _____

Overcome adverse sales conditions on CSO motivation _____

Coach CSO's on how to start conversations with customers _____

Support CSO's experiencing difficulty with outbound sales and service calls _____

Assist CSO's develop better customer profiling skills _____

### *Work Climate*

Help CSO's with their customer sales and service skills _____

Get CSO's to believe they can do well in their work _____

Build an environment where everyone works well together _____

Role model required CSO behaviour _____

### *Working at the Counter*

Acknowledge customers waiting in line _____

Provide a warm and friendly greeting to customers _____

Smile and make eye contact regularly while speaking with customers _____

Start a meaningful conversation with a customer during a routine transaction _____

Ask a customer an open-ended question when an opportunity arises _____

Ask customers to come in for a Profile during an over the counter transaction _____

Seek help from a colleague when you find it difficult to chat to customers _____

### *Profiling*

Access computer to commence profiling process _____

Lead the customer through the profiling process _____

Enter information about a customer's financial status _____

Identify potential areas for the bank to provide more financial services _____

Point out potential areas for customer to improve their banking _____

Make recommendations to customers based on their specific needs _____

Refer the customer to a product specialist when a specific need is identified _____

Ask the customer for their business where a clear need has been identified _____

### *Outbound Sales & Service*

Review and identify the list of customers to contact _____

Access database to obtain customer details _____

Establish contact with customers on list to make appointment _____

Communicate the benefit of the appointment to the customer _____

Ask customers to come in for an appointment _____

Call customers to re-confirm appointment _____

## SECTION 2 – BRANCH MANAGER RESPONSES

**(38 questions – Skip this part of Section 2 if you are not a Branch Manager)**

This questionnaire is designed to help us get a better understanding of the kinds of things that can be difficult for branch managers. Please rate how certain you are that you can do each of the tasks described below by writing the appropriate number.

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 using the scale given below:*

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot Certain do at all** | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | | **Highly can do** |

| | **Confidence (0-100)** |
|---|---|
| ***Decision Making*** | |
| Influence the decisions that are made in the branch | _____ |
| Express my views freely on important branch matters | _____ |
| Get the resources I need to manage the business effectively | _____ |
| Receive support from my manager on difficult decisions | _____ |
| ***Management*** | |
| Help SCSO/CSO's undertake necessary tasks to reach difficult targets | _____ |
| Motivate SCSO/CSO's who show low interest in achieving targets | _____ |
| Overcome adverse sales conditions on SCSO/CSO motivation | _____ |
| Coach SCSO/CSO's on how to start conversations with customers | _____ |
| Support SCSO/CSO's experiencing difficulty with outbound sales | _____ |
| Assist SCSO/CSO's develop better customer profiling skills | _____ |
| ***Work Climate*** | |
| Help SCSO/CSO's with their customer sales and service skills | _____ |
| Get SCSO/CSO's to believe they can do well in their work | _____ |
| Build an environment where everyone works well together | _____ |
| Role model required SCSO/CSO behaviour | _____ |
| Make the branch a safe place to work | _____ |
| Provide an environment where employees enjoy coming to work | _____ |
| Positively impact on SCSO/CSO's absenteeism and turnover | _____ |
| ***Working at the Counter*** | |
| Acknowledge customers waiting in line | _____ |
| Provide a warm and friendly greeting to customers | _____ |

Smile and make eye contact regularly while speaking with customers _____

Start a meaningful conversation with a customer during a routine transaction _____

Ask a customer an open-ended question when an opportunity arises _____

Ask customers to come in for a Profile during an over the counter transaction _____

Seek help from a colleague when you find it difficult to chat to customers _____

***Profiling***

Access computer to commence profiling process _____

Lead the customer through the profiling process _____

Enter information about a customer's financial status _____

Identify potential areas for the bank to provide more financial services _____

Point out potential areas for customer to improve their banking _____

Make recommendations to customers based on their specific needs _____

Refer the customer to a product specialist when a specific need is identified _____

Ask the customer for their business where a clear need has been identified _____

***Outbound Sales & Service***

Review and identify the list of customers to contact _____

Access database to obtain customer details _____

Establish contact with customers on list to make appointment _____

Communicate the benefit of the appointment to the customer _____

Ask customers to come in for an appointment _____

Call customers to re-confirm appointment _____

## SECTION 3 -TOTAL BRANCH RESPONSES

**(21 questions – Everyone to complete)**

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for the **branch as a whole** in their work activities. Please rate how certain you are that your **branch as a whole** can do the things described below by writing the appropriate number.

Rate your degree of confidence in **EVERYONE IN YOUR BRANCH** by recording a number from 0 to 100 using the scale given below:

**0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100**

| Cannot do at all | Moderately Certain can do | Highly can do | Confidence (0-100) |
|---|---|---|---|

***Working at the Counter***

| | |
|---|---|
| Acknowledge customers waiting in line | _____ |
| Provide a warm and friendly greeting to customers | _____ |
| Smile and make eye contact regularly while speaking with customers | _____ |
| Start a meaningful conversation with a customer during a routine transaction | _____ |
| Ask a customer an open-ended question when an opportunity arises | _____ |
| Ask customers to come in for a Profile during an over the counter transaction | _____ |
| Seek help from a colleague when you find it difficult to chat to customers | _____ |

***Profiling***

| | |
|---|---|
| Access computer to commence profiling process | _____ |
| Lead the customer through the profiling process | _____ |
| Enter information about a customer's financial status | _____ |
| Identify potential areas for the bank to provide more financial services | _____ |
| Point out potential areas for customer to improve their banking | _____ |
| Make recommendations to customers based on their specific needs | _____ |
| Refer the customer to a product specialist when a specific need is identified | _____ |
| Ask the customer for their business where a clear need has been identified | _____ |

***Outbound Sales & Service***

| | |
|---|---|
| Review and identify the list of customers to contact | _____ |
| Access database to obtain customer details | _____ |
| Establish contact with customers on list to make appointment | _____ |
| Communicate the benefit of the appointment to the customer | _____ |
| Ask customers to come in for an appointment | _____ |
| Call customers to re-confirm appointment | _____ |

## Appendix XVI – Bank S Employee Survey – Part 2 – Post-intervention

This is the final survey in the research project. We sincerely appreciate you taking the time to complete this one as best you can as it's a critical last step. Your responses are confidential – Richard Carter from Macquarie University is the only person who will ever see your individual survey responses. The results of the survey will only be available to Bank S in summary format in a way that no individual can be identified.

**Name (For contact and record keeping purposes only) _____**

**Location (For contact and record keeping purposes only) _____**

This survey contains 2 parts. Each part should take a maximum of 10 minutes to complete. In Part 1, you will be asked to rate your level of confidence on a series of work related tasks and situations, just as you were on the second survey in October last year. Your level of confidence may or may not vary as the situations described in the questions change. The first 10 questions in the CSO Role section have the same format as the second survey last year while the final 7 questions are formatted slightly differently. Similarly, the first 5 questions in the Supervisory/Management Role section have the same format as the second survey last year while the final 6 questions are formatted slightly differently. There is a practice question at the beginning of each section to help you at the start as well as become familiar with the newly formatted questions. In Part 2, you will be asked questions relating to your job, work environment, yourself and customers just as you were in the first survey in October last year.

In order to complete Part 1 comfortably within 10 minutes, don't think too much about your answers. **Simply enter the first number you think of from 0 to 100 that is a multiple of 10**. This answer will be the one that best represents your degree of confidence. Please make sure you enter a number from 0 to 100 for **every** situation.

In order to complete Part 2 comfortably within 10 minutes, don't think too much about your answers. **Simply click on the number you believe best represents your feelings.** For most people, the first number they think of is the most accurate reflection of their feelings.

**PART 1 – Introduction**

This questionnaire is designed to help us get a better understanding of the kinds of things that can be difficult for Senior CSO's and Branch Managers. You will be asked to rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) using the scale given below:

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot do at all** | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | | **Highly Certain can do** |

To familiarize yourself with the survey, please complete the following practice question.

**Practice Question**

Q1. Think about your ability right now to start a meaningful conversation with a customer during a routine transaction when it's busy. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) using the scale given below for **each** of the statements:*

| **0** | **10** | **20** | **30** | **40** | **50** | **60** | **70** | **80** | **90** | **100** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Cannot do at all | Moderately can do | Highly Certain can do | Confidence (0-100) |
|---|---|---|---|

When it's busy, I can start a meaningful conversation during a routine transaction with:

| | |
|---|---|
| At least 1 out of every 10 customers | _____ |
| At least 1 out of every 5 customers | _____ |
| Close to half of all customers | _____ |
| More than half of all customers | _____ |
| Most customers | _____ |
| Every customer | _____ |

## SAMPLE ANSWERS

If you are very confident you can start a meaningful conversation during a routine transaction when it's busy with at least 1 out of every 10 customers, your answer would look something like this: *At least 1 out of every 10 customers* ___100

If you are confident you can start a meaningful conversation during a routine transaction when it's busy with at least 1 out of every 5 customers, your answer would look something like this: *At least 1 out of every 5 customers* ___90

If you are pretty confident you can start a meaningful conversation during a routine transaction when it's busy with close to half of all customers, your answer would look something like this: *Close to half of all customers* ___70

If you are reasonably confident you can start a meaningful conversation during a routine transaction when it's busy with more than half of all customers, your answer would look something like this: *More than half of all customers* ___50

If you are somewhat confident you can start a meaningful conversation during a routine transaction when it's busy with most customers your answer would look something like this: *Most customers* ___30

If you aren't confident at all you can start a meaningful conversation during a routine transaction when it's busy with every customer, your answer would look something like this: *Every customer* ___0

## PART 1 – CSO Role

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) using the scale given below for **each** of the statements:*

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot do at all** | | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | **Highly Certain can do** |

| | **Confidence (0-100)** |
|---|---|
| 1. Provide a warm and friendly greeting to customers while working at the counter | _____ |
| 2. Smile and make eye contact regularly while speaking with customers at the counter | _____ |
| 3. Ask customers to come in for a Profile during an over the counter transaction | _____ |
| 4. Ask a customer an open-ended question when an opportunity arises during an over the counter transaction | _____ |
| 5. Identify potential areas for the bank to provide more financial services during a profiling session | _____ |
| 6. Point out potential areas for customer to improve their banking during a profiling session | _____ |
| 7. Make recommendations to customers based on their specific needs during a profiling session | _____ |
| 8. Ask the customer for their business where a clear need has been identified during a profiling session | _____ |
| 9. Communicate the benefit of the appointment to the customer when making an outbound sales and service telephone call | _____ |
| 10. Ask customers to come in for an appointment when making an outbound sales and service telephone call | _____ |

**PLEASE NOTE NEW FORMAT FOR NEXT 7 QUESTIONS**

11. Think about your ability right now to ask an open-ended question during an interaction with a customer. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

During a customer interaction, I can:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 11.1 | Ask at least 1 open-ended question | _____ |
| 11.2 | Ask at least 2 open-ended questions | _____ |
| 11.3 | Ask at least 4 open-ended questions | _____ |
| 11.4 | Ask at least 6 open-ended questions | _____ |
| 11.5 | Ask at least 8 open-ended questions | _____ |
| 11.6 | Ask at least 10 open-ended questions | _____ |

12. Think about your ability right now to ask customers to come in for a Profile during an over the counter transaction when there's a long queue. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

During an over the counter transaction when there's a long queue, I can ask:

12.1 At least 1 out of every 10 customers to come in for a Profile _____
12.2 At least 1 out of every 5 customers to come in for a Profile _____
12.3 Close to half of all customers to come in for a Profile _____
12.4 More than half of all customers to come in for a Profile _____
12.5 Most customers to come in for a Profile _____
12.6 Every customer to come in for a Profile _____

13. Think about your ability right now to point out potential areas for customers to improve their Banking. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can point out to customers:

13.1 1 or more potential area to improve their Banking _____
13.2 2 or more potential areas to improve their Banking _____
13.3 3 or more potential areas to improve their Banking _____
13.4 4 or more potential areas to improve their Banking _____
13.5 5 or more potential areas to improve their Banking _____
13.6 6 or more potential areas to improve their Banking _____

14. Think about your ability right now to make recommendations to customers based on their specific needs. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

Based on their specific needs, I can make:

14.1 At least 1 recommendation to customers _____
14.2 At least 2 recommendations to customers _____
14.3 At least 3 recommendations to customers _____
14.4 At least 4 recommendations to customers _____
14.5 At least 5 recommendations to customers _____
14.6 At least 6 recommendations to customers _____

15. Think about your ability right now to ask customers for their business where a clear need has been identified but the customer has expressed a concern or a potential objection. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

Where a clear need has been identified I can ask a customer for their business:

15.1 When they haven't expressed any concerns or potential objections _____
15.2 When they've expressed at least 1 concern or potential objection _____
15.3 When they've expressed at least 2 concerns or potential objections _____
15.4 When they've expressed at least 3 concerns or potential objections _____
15.5 When they've expressed at least 4 concerns or potential objections _____
15.6 When they've expressed at least 5 concerns or potential objections _____

16. Think about your ability right now to clearly communicate the benefit of a Profiling appointment to a customer over the telephone when you only have half an hour to make your weekly calls. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can clearly communicate the benefit of a Profiling appointment over the telephone to:

16.1 At least 1 customer I successfully contact in a month _____
16.2 At least 2 customers I successfully contact in a month _____
16.3 At least 5 customers I successfully contact in a month _____
16.4 At least 10 customers I successfully contact in a month _____
16.5 At least 15 customers I successfully contact in a month _____
16.6 Every customer I successfully contact in a month _____

17. Think about your ability right now to **confidently** ask customers to come in for a Profile over the telephone when you have less than half an hour to make your weekly calls. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

When I have less than half an hour to make my weekly calls, I can confidently ask:

17.1 At least 1 customer per month to come in for a Profile _____
17.2 At least 2 customers per month to come in for a Profile _____
17.3 At least 5 customers per month to come in for a Profile _____
17.4 At least 10 customers per month to come in for a Profile _____
17.5 At least 15 customers per month to come in for a Profile _____
17.6 Every customer to come in for a Profile _____

## PART 1 – Supervisory/Management Role

**Practice Question**

Think about your ability right now to get CSO's to believe they can do well in their job even when they've only recently completed induction training. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) using the scale given below for **each** of the statements:*

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot do at all** | | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | **Highly Certain can do** |

| | **Confidence (0-100)** |
|---|---|
| I can get CSO's to believe that with practice they can do their job well: | |
| At least once a month | _____ |
| At least once a fortnight | _____ |
| At least once a week | _____ |
| At least twice a week | _____ |
| Almost every day | _____ |
| Every day | _____ |

## SAMPLE ANSWERS

If you are very confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well at least once a month , your answer would look something like this:

*At least once a month* 100

If you are confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well at least once a fortnight, your answer would look something like this:

*At least once a fortnight* 80

If you are reasonably confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well at least once a week, your answer would look something like this:

*At least once a week* 50

If you are somewhat confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well at least twice a week, your answer would look something like this:

*At least twice a week* 30

If you are slightly confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well almost every day, your answer would look something like this:

*Almost every day* 10

If you aren't at all confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well every day, your answer would look something like this:

*Every day* 0

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) using the scale given below for **each** of the statements:*

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot do at all** | | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | **Highly Certain can do** |

| | **Confidence (0-100)** |
|---|---|
| 18. Motivate CSO's who show low interest in achieving targets | _____ |
| 19. Overcome adverse sales conditions on CSO motivation | _____ |
| 20. Support CSO's experiencing difficulty with outbound sales | _____ |
| 21. Assist CSO's develop better customer profiling skills | _____ |
| 22. Help CSO's with their customer sales and service skills | _____ |

**PLEASE NOTE NEW FORMAT FOR NEXT 6 QUESTIONS**

23. Think about your ability right now to motivate CSO's who show low interest in achieving targets? How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can motivate CSO's who show low interest in achieving targets:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 23.1 | At least once a month | _____ |
| 23.2 | At least once a fortnight | _____ |
| 23.3 | At least once a week | _____ |
| 23.4 | At least twice a week | _____ |
| 23.5 | Almost every day | _____ |
| 23.6 | Every day | _____ |

Q24. Think about your ability right now to help CSO's overcome adverse sales conditions on CSO motivation. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can overcome adverse sales conditions on CSO motivation:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 24.1 | At least once a month | _____ |
| 24.2 | At least once a fortnight | _____ |
| 24.3 | At least once a week | _____ |
| 24.4 | At least twice a week | _____ |
| 24.5 | Almost every day | _____ |
| 24.6 | Every day | _____ |

Q25. Think about your ability right now to help CSO's with their customer sales and service skills. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can help CSO's with their customer sales and service skills:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 25.1 | At least once a month | _____ |
| 25.2 | At least once a fortnight | _____ |
| 25.3 | At least once a week | _____ |
| 25.4 | At least twice a week | _____ |

25.5 Almost every day _____
25.6 Every day _____

26. Think about your ability right now to help CSO's undertake necessary tasks to reach targets. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can help CSO's undertake the necessary tasks to reach targets:

26.1 At least once a month _____
26.2 At least once a fortnight _____
26.3 At least once a week _____
26.4 At least twice a week _____
26.5 Almost every day _____
26.6 Every day _____

Q27. Think about your ability right now to assist CSO's develop better customer profiling skills. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can assist CSO's develop better customer profiling skills:

27.1 At least once a month _____
27.2 At least once a fortnight _____
27.3 At least once a week _____
27.4 At least twice a week _____
27.5 Almost every day _____
27.6 Every day _____

28. Think about your ability right now to support CSO's having difficulty with outbound sales and service calls. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can support CSO's having difficulty with outbound sales and service calls:

28.1 At least once a month _____
28.2 At least once a fortnight _____
28.3 At least once a week _____
28.4 At least twice a week _____
28.5 Almost every day _____
28.6 Every day _____

## PART 2

The focus in Part 2 of this survey is to develop a better understanding of the personal and workplace factors that impact employee attitudes, behaviour and performance. The findings will be used to help improve your job satisfaction and customer service levels.

**PLEASE NOTE:**
**The scoring format is different than in Part 1. It also changes between some Sections. There will be a reminder whenever the scoring format changes.**

**The first 2 sections generally concern your job and your work environment.**

Section 1

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

1. I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. My job gets to me more than it should
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 2

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

4. Bank S cares about my opinions.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Bank S shows very little concern for me
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. Bank S cares about my general satisfaction at work
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. Bank S really cares about my well being
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**The next 3 sections generally concern how you see yourself**

Section 3

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

8. I feel I have a number of good qualities
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I am able to do things as well as most other people
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. I wish I could have more respect for myself
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. At times I think I am no good at all
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 4

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

12. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 5

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

20. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. Getting people to do the right things depends upon ability: luck has nothing to do with it.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. What happens to me is my own doing.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 6

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

26. In most ways my life is close to my ideal
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. The conditions of my life are excellent
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. I am satisfied with my life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**The next 4 sections generally concerns customers**

**PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT SCORING FORMAT FOR NEXT SECTION**

Section 7

***The following questions are about problems that could occur in your branch.***
*Some of these problems might be of concern to you whereas other problems might not be of concern to you.*

**1 = definitely not my concern; 2 = might be my concern; 3 = somewhat my concern; 4 = probably my concern; 5 = definitely my concern**

31. A customer at your branch needs assistance
    1 2 3 4 5
32. The quality of service in your branch is not as good as it could be
    1 2 3 4 5
33. There is a lack of team-work within your branch
    1 2 3 4 5
34. A customer who has previously dealt with your colleague needs help
    1 2 3 4 5
35. Other employees in your branch are not developing new skills
    1 2 3 4 5
36. Some colleagues in your branch are not pulling their weight
    1 2 3 4 5
37. Different people in your branch are not co-ordinating their efforts.
    1 2 3 4 5
38. Information from mystery shoppers suggests there is a poor quality service level in your branch
    1 2 3 4 5
39. Customers in your branch are not receiving the information that they should be such as a Product Disclosure Statements
    1 2 3 4 5
40. Opportunities for sales to customers in your branch are not being pursued
    1 2 3 4 5

**PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT SCORING FORMAT FOR NEXT 3 SECTIONS**

Section 8

**How often over the past month have you:**
**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

41. Carried out the core activities of your job well
    1 2 3 4 5
42. Completed your core activities well following standard procedures
    1 2 3 4 5
43. Ensured all your activities were completed properly
    1 2 3 4 5
44. Initiated better ways of doing your core activities
    1 2 3 4 5
45. Come up with ideas to remove roadblocks and implement best practice in completing your core activities
    1 2 3 4 5
46. Made changes to the way your activities are done

1 2 3 4 5

47. Anticipated issues or needs customers might have and developed solutions
1 2 3 4 5
48. Taken the initiative to communicate client requirements to other service areas within the bank
1 2 3 4 5
49. Checked with customers to verify that their expectations have been met or exceeded
1 2 3 4 5
50. Followed through with customer interactions to ensure a smooth transition to other service representatives
1 2 3 4 5

Section 9

**When dealing with customers, to what extent do you:**
**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

51. Put on an act in order to deal with customers in an appropriate way?
1 2 3 4 5
52. Fake a good mood when interacting with customers?
1 2 3 4 5
53. Put on a 'show' or 'performance' when interacting with customers?
1 2 3 4 5
54. Just pretend to have the emotions you need to display for your job?
1 2 3 4 5
55. Try to actually experience the emotions you must show to customers?
1 2 3 4 5
56. Work hard to feel the emotions that you need to show to customers?
1 2 3 4 5
57. Make an effort to actually feel the emotions that you need to display towards customers?
1 2 3 4 5

Section 10

**When dealing with customers, to what extent do you:**
**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

58. Imagine how things look from their perspective? 1 2 3 4 5

59. Think about how you would feel in their situation? 1 2 3 4 5

60. Try to see things from their viewpoint? 1 2 3 4 5

61. Try to imagine yourself as a customer in a similar situation?
1 2 3 4 5

**The last section generally concerns how you feel at work**

**PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT SCORING FORMAT FOR LAST SECTION**

Section 11

Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, cross the “0” (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you felt it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

| Never | Almost Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Never | A few times a year or less | Once a month | A few times or less a month | Once a week | A few times a week | Every day |

62. At my work, I feel like I am bursting with energy
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
63. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
64. I am enthusiastic about my job
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
65. My job inspires me
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
66. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
67. I feel happy when I am working intensely
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
68. I am proud of the work that I do
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
69. I am immersed in my work
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
70. I get carried away when I am working
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

## PART 1 – Supervisory/Management Role

**Practice Question**

Think about your ability right now to get CSO's to believe they can do well in their job even when they've only recently completed induction training. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) using the scale given below for **each** of the statements:*

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot do at all** | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | | **Highly Certain can do** |

| | **Confidence (0-100)** |
|---|---|
| I can get CSO's to believe that with practice they can do their job well: | |
| At least once a month | _____ |
| At least once a fortnight | _____ |
| At least once a week | _____ |
| At least twice a week | _____ |
| Almost every day | _____ |
| Every day | _____ |

**SAMPLE ANSWERS**

If you are very confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well at least once a month , your answer would look something like this:

*At least once a month* 100

If you are confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well at least once a fortnight, your answer would look something like this:

*At least once a fortnight* 80

If you are reasonably confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well at least once a week, your answer would look something like this:

*At least once a week* 50

If you are somewhat confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well at least twice a week, your answer would look something like this:

*At least twice a week* 30

If you are slightly confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well almost every day, your answer would look something like this:

*Almost every day* 10

If you aren't at all confident that you can get CSO's to believe they will be able to do their job well every day, your answer would look something like this:

*Every day* 0

*Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 (in multiples of 10) using the scale given below for **each** of the statements:*

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cannot do at all** | | | | | | **Moderately can do** | | | | **Highly Certain can do** |

| | **Confidence (0-100)** |
|---|---|
| 18. Motivate CSO's who show low interest in achieving targets | _____ |
| 19. Overcome adverse sales conditions on CSO motivation | _____ |
| 20. Support CSO's experiencing difficulty with outbound sales | _____ |
| 21. Assist CSO's develop better customer profiling skills | _____ |
| 22. Help CSO's with their customer sales and service skills | _____ |

**PLEASE NOTE NEW FORMAT FOR NEXT 6 QUESTIONS**

23. Think about your ability right now to motivate CSO's who show low interest in achieving targets? How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can motivate CSO's who show low interest in achieving targets:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 23.1 | At least once a month | _____ |
| 23.2 | At least once a fortnight | _____ |
| 23.3 | At least once a week | _____ |
| 23.4 | At least twice a week | _____ |
| 23.5 | Almost every day | _____ |
| 23.6 | Every day | _____ |

Q24. Think about your ability right now to help CSO's overcome adverse sales conditions on CSO motivation. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can overcome adverse sales conditions on CSO motivation:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 24.1 | At least once a month | _____ |
| 24.2 | At least once a fortnight | _____ |
| 24.3 | At least once a week | _____ |
| 24.4 | At least twice a week | _____ |
| 24.5 | Almost every day | _____ |
| 24.6 | Every day | _____ |

Q25. Think about your ability right now to help CSO's with their customer sales and service skills. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can help CSO's with their customer sales and service skills:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 25.1 | At least once a month | _____ |
| 25.2 | At least once a fortnight | _____ |
| 25.3 | At least once a week | _____ |

25.4 At least twice a week _____
25.5 Almost every day _____
25.6 Every day _____

26. Think about your ability right now to help CSO's undertake necessary tasks to reach targets. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can help CSO's undertake the necessary tasks to reach targets:

26.1 At least once a month _____
26.2 At least once a fortnight _____
26.3 At least once a week _____
26.4 At least twice a week _____
26.5 Almost every day _____
26.6 Every day _____

Q27. Think about your ability right now to assist CSO's develop better customer profiling skills. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can assist CSO's develop better customer profiling skills:

27.1 At least once a month _____
27.2 At least once a fortnight _____
27.3 At least once a week _____
27.4 At least twice a week _____
27.5 Almost every day _____
27.6 Every day _____

28. Think about your ability right now to support CSO's having difficulty with outbound sales and service calls. How **certain** are you about how often you can do so?

I can support CSO's having difficulty with outbound sales and service calls:

28.1 At least once a month _____
28.2 At least once a fortnight _____
28.3 At least once a week _____
28.4 At least twice a week _____
28.5 Almost every day _____
28.6 Every day _____

## PART 2

The focus in Part 2 of this survey is to develop a better understanding of the personal and workplace factors that impact employee attitudes, behaviour and performance. The findings will be used to help improve your job satisfaction and customer service levels.

**PLEASE NOTE:**
**The scoring format is different than in Part 1. It also changes between some Sections. There will be a reminder whenever the scoring format changes.**

**The first 2 sections generally concern your job and your work environment.**

Section 1

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

1. I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. My job gets to me more than it should
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 2

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

4. Bank S cares about my opinions.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Bank S shows very little concern for me
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. Bank S cares about my general satisfaction at work
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. Bank S really cares about my well being
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**The next 3 sections generally concern how you see yourself**

Section 3

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

8. I feel I have a number of good qualities
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I am able to do things as well as most other people
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. I wish I could have more respect for myself
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. At times I think I am no good at all
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 4

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

12. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 5

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

20. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. Getting people to do the right things depends upon ability: luck has nothing to do with it.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. What happens to me is my own doing.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 6

**1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree;**
**4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

26. In most ways my life is close to my ideal
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. The conditions of my life are excellent
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. I am satisfied with my life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**The next 4 sections generally concerns customers**

**PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT SCORING FORMAT FOR NEXT SECTION**

Section 7

***The following questions are about problems that could occur in your branch.***
*Some of these problems might be of concern to you whereas other problems might not be of concern to you.*

**1 = definitely not my concern; 2 = might be my concern; 3 = somewhat my concern; 4 = probably my concern; 5 = definitely my concern**

31. A customer at your branch needs assistance
    1 2 3 4 5
32. The quality of service in your branch is not as good as it could be
    1 2 3 4 5
33. There is a lack of team-work within your branch
    1 2 3 4 5
34. A customer who has previously dealt with your colleague needs help
    1 2 3 4 5
35. Other employees in your branch are not developing new skills
    1 2 3 4 5
36. Some colleagues in your branch are not pulling their weight
    1 2 3 4 5
37. Different people in your branch are not co-ordinating their efforts.
    1 2 3 4 5
38. Information from mystery shoppers suggests there is a poor quality service level in your branch
    1 2 3 4 5
39. Customers in your branch are not receiving the information that they should be such as a Product Disclosure Statements
    1 2 3 4 5
40. Opportunities for sales to customers in your branch are not being pursued
    1 2 3 4 5

**PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT SCORING FORMAT FOR NEXT 3 SECTIONS**

Section 8

**How often over the past month have you:**
**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

41. Carried out the core activities of your job well
    1 2 3 4 5
42. Completed your core activities well following standard procedures
    1 2 3 4 5
43. Ensured all your activities were completed properly
    1 2 3 4 5
44. Initiated better ways of doing your core activities
    1 2 3 4 5
45. Come up with ideas to remove roadblocks and implement best practice in completing your core activities
    1 2 3 4 5

46. Made changes to the way your activities are done
1 2 3 4 5
47. Anticipated issues or needs customers might have and developed solutions
1 2 3 4 5
48. Taken the initiative to communicate client requirements to other service areas within the bank
1 2 3 4 5
49. Checked with customers to verify that their expectations have been met or exceeded
1 2 3 4 5
50. Followed through with customer interactions to ensure a smooth transition to other service representatives
1 2 3 4 5

Section 9

**When dealing with customers, to what extent do you:**
**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

51. Put on an act in order to deal with customers in an appropriate way?
1 2 3 4 5
52. Fake a good mood when interacting with customers?
1 2 3 4 5
53. Put on a 'show' or 'performance' when interacting with customers?
1 2 3 4 5
54. Just pretend to have the emotions you need to display for your job?
1 2 3 4 5
55. Try to actually experience the emotions you must show to customers?
1 2 3 4 5
56. Work hard to feel the emotions that you need to show to customers?
1 2 3 4 5
57. Make an effort to actually feel the emotions that you need to display towards customers?
1 2 3 4 5

Section 10

**When dealing with customers, to what extent do you:**
**1 = very little; 2 = a little; 3 = quite a bit; 4 = a lot; 5 = a great deal**

58. Imagine how things look from their perspective? 1 2 3 4 5

59. Think about how you would feel in their situation? 1 2 3 4 5

60. Try to see things from their viewpoint? 1 2 3 4 5

61. Try to imagine yourself as a customer in a similar situation?
1 2 3 4 5

**The last section generally concerns how you feel at work**

**PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT SCORING FORMAT FOR LAST SECTION**

Section 11

Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, cross the “0” (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you felt it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

| Never | Almost Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Never | A few times a year or less | Once a month | A few times or less a month | Once a week | A few times a week | Every day |

62. At my work, I feel like I am bursting with energy
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
63. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
64. I am enthusiastic about my job
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
65. My job inspires me
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
66. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
67. I feel happy when I am working intensely
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
68. I am proud of the work that I do
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
69. I am immersed in my work
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
70. I get carried away when I am working
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

# Appendix XVII – Scale Reliability

| Scale (# of items) | N | Pre-Intervention Cronbach's Alpha | N | Post-Intervention Cronbach's Alpha | Originally Reported Cronbach's Alpha (No. of Likert scale points if different from current study) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frontline Basic Task Self-Efficacy (2) | 104 | .83 | 66 | .94 | N.A. |
| Frontline Advanced Task Self-Efficacy (8) | 104 | .91 | 66 | .94 | N.A. |
| Frontline Target Task Self-Efficacy (5) | 104 | .90 | 66 | .90 | N.A. |
| Frontline Non-Target Task Self-Efficacy (5) | 104 | .71 | 66 | .88 | N.A. |
| Employee Engagement (EE) (9) | 109 | .90 | 59 | .94 | .92 |
| EE - Vigor Sub-scale (3) | 110 | .81 | 59 | .85 | .77 |
| EE - Dedication Sub-scale (3) | 109 | .83 | 59 | .86 | .85 |
| EE - Absorption Sub-scale (3) | 110 | .70 | 59 | .87 | .78 |
| General Self-Efficacy (8) | 107 | .91 | 61 | .91 | .87 (5-point) |
| Self-Esteem (4) | 104 | .70 | 61 | .74 | .72 to .88 (5-point) |
| Locus of Control (6) | 106 | .62 | 61 | .67 | .68 (5-point) |
| Satisfaction with Life (5) | 109 | .91 | 61 | .88 | .87 |
| Job Stress (Anxiety Sub-Scale) (3) | 109 | .86 | 61 | .86 | .71 to .82 (5-point) |
| Perceived Organizational Support (4) | 105 | .82 | 61 | .84 | .74 to .95 |
| FRO Customer Service (FROCS) (9) | 106 | .85 | 59 | .95 | .90 |
| FRO Performance (FROPE) (10) | 107 | .89 | 59 | .91 | .90 |
| FROCS – Customer Subscale (6) | 108 | .75 | 59 | .93 | N.R. |
| FROCS – Colleague Subscale (3) | 107 | .92 | 59 | .96 | N.R. |
| FROPE – Proactive Subscale (3) | 108 | .89 | 59 | .87 | .93 |
| FROPE – Task Subscale (3) | 108 | .92 | 59 | .92 | .87 |
| FROPE – Customer Subscale (3) | 107 | .84 | 54 | .79 | .88 |
| Surface Acting (4) | 105 | .92 | 59 | .93 | .88 |
| Deep Acting (3) | 103 | .90 | 59 | .92 | .84 |
| Non-Controlling Supervision (4) | 112 | .58 | | | .67 |
| Role Overload (4) | 112 | .73 | | | .60 to .64 (4-point) |
| Work Control (4) | 110 | .85 | | | .87 (5-point) |
| Self-Categorization (3) | 107 | .52 | | | N.R. |
| Big Five - Extraversion (2)* | 108 | .59 | | | N.R. |
| Big Five - Agreeableness (3)* | 107 | .52 | | | N.R. |
| Big Five - Conscientiousness (2)* | 108 | .62 | | | N.R. |
| Big Five - Openness to Experience (2)* | 109 | -.03** | | | N.R. |
| Big Five - Neuroticism (2)* | 109 | .65 | | | N.R. |
| Integrated Understanding (5) | 107 | .86 | | | .83 (5-point) |
| Perspective Taking (4) | | | 59 | .98 | .95 (5-point) |

*11-item abbreviated version of 44-item Big Five Inventory – Average Part-whole correlation reported of .83
**Dropped from all further analysis
N.R. – None Reported. N.A. – Not Applicable