

**TITLE** The Job Demands-Resources Model of Work Engagement in South African Call Centres

**RESEARCHER** Janse van Rensburg, Y., Boonzaier, B., & Boonzaier, M.  
Department of Industrial Psychology,  
Stellenbosch University (South Africa)  
*Journal of Human Resource Management*, 2013, Vol. 11, no. 1

**OBJECTIVE** The purpose of this research was to understand and investigate the relationships between leadership effectiveness, sense of coherence, team effectiveness and work engagement within a call center environment.

### **METHODOLOGY**

A cross-sectional survey was conducted on a sample of 217 call center representatives (CCRs) from seven call centers in South Africa. Respondents completed the Leadership Practices Inventory-Observer, the shortened Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Fourie, et al., 2008), the short form of the Orientation to Life Questionnaire (Stumpfer & DeBruin, 2009), and the Team Diagnostic Survey (Wageman, et al., 2005). The typical respondent was female (56%), 29.2 years of age, with an average of 3.3. years with the organization. The racial demographics were: 39% White people, 33% Mixed race people, 24% African people and 4% Indian people. Thirty-five percent of the CCRs were from Pretoria, 50% from Cape Town and 15% from Johannesburg. Internal reliability coefficients for the LPI-O were: .93 Model, .94 Inspire, .92 Challenge, .89 Enable, and .93 Encourage. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the LPI was found to be satisfactory.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

The most frequently practiced leadership behavior was Inspire, followed by Model, Encourage, Challenge and Enable. No statistically significant relationships were found between the five leadership practices and the demographic variables of gender, age, ethnicity and the different locations of call centers.

Using The Five Practices framework as a measure of “leadership effectiveness” produced a significant positive influence on the sense of coherence and effectiveness of teams of call center representatives. These results showed that if the team leader of a call center was effective in leading their team, the team would function effectively and employees will regard their work as meaningful when a degree of independence and freedom of choice is allowed in the performance of their tasks. However, the non-significant relationship between leadership effectiveness and work engagement, according to the authors, “clearly reflects on the call center representative’s diminished perception of the function and task of call center managers. Managers were possibly viewed as administrators who do not provide job resources and who do not serve the needs of their call center representatives” (p. 11).