

*Psychological Wellbeing as a Consequence of Situational Elements
in the New Labour Market*

Thesis submitted by

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Academic

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ABSTRACT

Approximately four thousand call centres employ more than 160,000 people in Australia, yet relatively little attention has been paid to how this type of work influences the wellbeing of those who do it – despite substantially higher absence frequencies and turnover rates relative to other industries. Utilising a survey design, the present study compared two situational elements models in their prediction of context-free and job-related psychological wellbeing in two samples of public sector call centre operators. The replicated findings were that the situational elements relating to the importance of clarity for how to derive social value and meet the expectations of the work environment were most predictive of psychological distress, life and job satisfaction. While the availability of money was also predictive of life satisfaction, situational elements relating to Job Scope were important to the prediction of job satisfaction. The addition of Job Scope variables found that Warr's (1987) model of Principal Environmental Influences was a stronger predictor of job satisfaction than Jahoda's (1981) Access to Categories of Experience (ACE) model. Therapeutic recommendations for job re-design required enrichment rather than simplification of call work.