

**A STUDY TO UNDERSTAND WHICH JOB CONTEXT FACTORS
ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGH EMPLOYEE TURNOVER RATE IN
CALL CENTERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUNE CITY**

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Abstract

Any organization that wants to control its employee turnover or increase retention should have a good understanding of the factors that lead to employee turnover. There are various factors that affect the individual's decision to leave a job. These factors can be grouped as individual related, Role or job related, Organization related. Economic factors like salary and perks, housing, quality of living, need for saving, societal factors like peer pressure, family reasons study of all these factors can throw some light on the issue as to why people are leaving their jobs. The factors may be at times very simple and can be answered by simple questions like where is the employee turnover occurring? Is it more in males than females? What level? Is there anything common among people who leave etc. Once the cause of employee turnover is identified, solving the problem becomes relatively easy. At least the organization can then determine if any internal interventions will help reduce the employee turnover.

In the current study the researcher wish to come up with the key reasons for employee turnover in the call center's located in the Pune city.

Keywords:

*Call centre
BPO
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factors affecting employee
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1. Introduction

Technological advancements often drive the reorientation of business models. Developments and advances in global telecommunications infrastructure and web architectures have fostered the establishment of a relatively new brand of services termed as the Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES). A boom in the activity of many organizations to outsource one or more IT intensive operations to an external provider acted as a catalyst to the growth seen in these Technology Enabled services in form of BPO's and Call centers. These external providers in turn own administer and manage the selected process according to certain defined and laid down performance criteria.

Call centers have become a craze among youngster. One could find a teenager to mid level professional working at call centers but as they say all that glitter is not gold, call center jobs could be lucrative and cumbersome at the same time. The business process outsourcing industry mostly caters solution to numerous service related sectors such as airlines, pharmaceuticals, credit card companies, dentists, cellular service companies and cable and internet providers. Call center could provide inbound call center services or outbound. In outbound process, an agent has to call a potential customer and inform him about the knowhow of a product whereas inbound services deal with incoming calls, emails or SMS services related to a product or services. An outbound call center job could be tediously repetitious owing to the nature of job.

The life at inbound Call Center is challenging and demands much more attention and presence of mind. An agent has no idea of question; query or feedback a caller would talk about next. The process timings of contact centers are 24/7. Calling people with the same script, resolving their issues regarding a product and working at a 12 hours gap can mentally, socially and physically drain out a person

Idealistically employees are expected to enjoy their work, like their co-workers, work dedicatedly and honestly for their employers, be happy with what they get paid with for their work, have ample chances of advancement and complete job satisfaction and never leave the organization, but then when we check the reality in the real professional world employees do leave their jobs either because they want more money, don't their working environment, can't cope up with their co-workers, because their spouse gets a dream job in another state or simply because they are bored and want a change all this can be the reasons to higher employee turnover.

Employee's leaving a job is considered attrition by one organization, it is looked at as talent acquisition by the other and for the individual it may mean a career move, economic growth and enhanced quality of life / convenience or closeness to family members. These reasons may vary from individual to individual.

Any method of controlling employee turnover or increasing retention should be based on a good understanding of the factors leading to employee turnover. There are various factors that affect the individual's decision to leave a job. These factors can be grouped as individual related, Role or job related, Organization related. Economic factors like salary and perks, housing, quality of living, need for saving, societal factors like peer pressure, family reasons etc can throw some light on the issue as to why people are leaving their jobs. The factors may be at times very simple and could be revealed by an examination of the statistical data. The statistical data can answer simple questions like where is the employee turnover occurring? Is it more in males than females? What level? Is there anything common among people who leave etc. Once the cause of employee quitting is identified, solving the problem becomes relatively easy. At least the organization can then determine if any internal interventions will help reduce employee turnover.

In the current study the researcher wish to come up with the key reasons for employee turnover in the call center's located in the Pune region. Since the call centre activities are booming in Pune and constitute a major part in revenue and employment (Babu P Ramesh, 2004)the researcher decided to choose that as the research topic.

The Published IT directory of MCCA (Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture, Pune, Maharashtra, India) was referred by the researcher to identify the total number of call center & BPO units located in the Pune City and from that framework few call centers were selected for conducting employee survey to understand the effect of work context factors on the employee turnover. Non-Probability accidental sampling technique was used to collect responses to the questionnaire.

The data collected through the questionnaire was analysed using statistical tools after tabulation and presented as frequency distribution table wherever appropriate.

Literature Review

Rose and Wright (2005) claimed that Call Centre representatives are generally carry a very low level of satisfaction because they carry a perception that their work is fairly low skilled and they claim that there are many sociological researches which show that low-skilled work does not result in intrinsic satisfaction as a result the employees are left with no other option but to look for satisfaction through pay and other compensatory mechanisms.

The researcher reviewed literature to understand exactly which of the Job context (extrinsic factors) instigates an individual to move from one job to other causing employee turnover in an organization.

The factors that are externally controlled are called as the work context factors. Such factors include job security, salary, benefits, promotions etc. In simplified form one can say that the organization is responsible for controlling those factors. Work activities and work oriented activities are very important. It identifies the actual duties and responsibilities associated with the job. The work context means the condition or environment in which the specific activities involved in the work take place.

The work context (how the work is organized) and the what the job involves contribute to stress levels, job satisfaction, commitment and motivation, which in turn impact on attendance of an employee. Good working conditions and job design are known to impact positively on morale and engagement, encouraging employees to come to work.

Key work context (Hygiene, extrinsic) factors included in the current study are role clarity, chemistry of the team, work conditions, Job security, salary, fringe benefits, company policies, supervisor behavior (practices). These factors are also referred to as KITA factors (kick in the ass) in the Herzberg theory, the process of providing incentives or a threat of punishment to cause someone to do something.

From the employee turnover point of view all these factors play a very important role in an organization. These factors were identified and data was collected by the researcher to find out which of these factors were the causes of employee turnover in the selected call center located in pune region for a period of past two years 2010 to 2012.

Objectives of the Study:

The objective of the study was to find out which work context factors were the causes of employee turnover among the selected call centers.

The researcher intended to find out whether the employee turnover is the result of work context related factors like salary, fringe benefits, company policies and supervisory practices or job security. What exactly is the main cause of employee turnover in call centre ?

2. Research Method

The current study is a social research in which the researcher had tried to identify which job context factors are responsible for high employee turnover in the selected call centers

Data collection

Data collection is the prime need of a researcher. While collecting the data the researcher had used questionnaire as the instrument for collecting the primary data.

Primary Data and Secondary Data

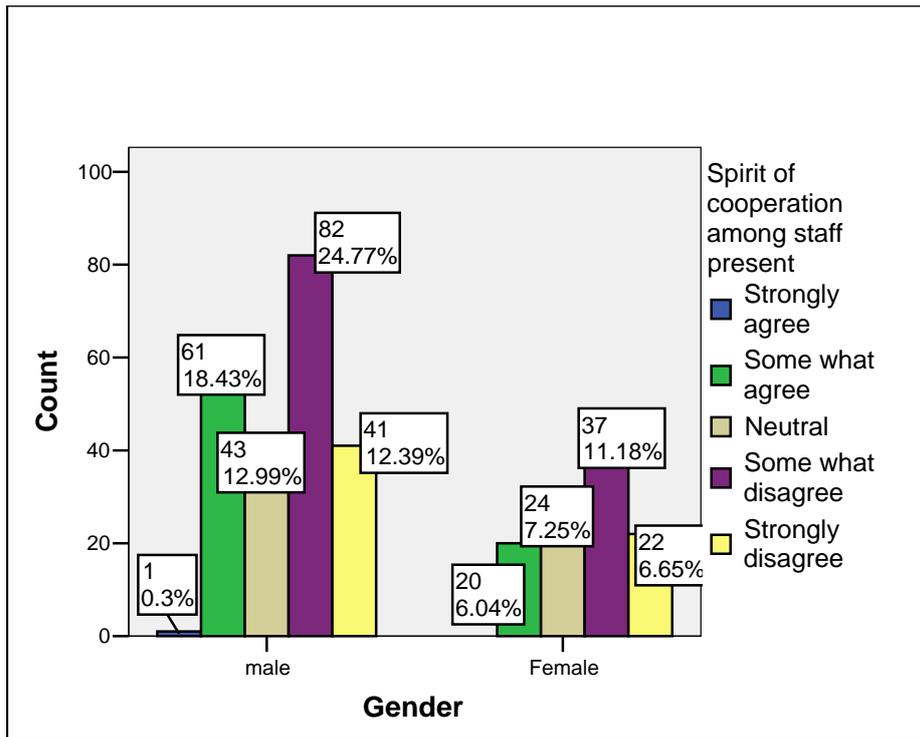
The researcher in the current study has collected the primary data through the questionnaires. The questionnaire had a combination of open ended and close ended questions.

The secondary data was collected through different sources like state and local government publications, foreign government publications, technical and trade journals, books, magazines, newspapers, business and industry publications, statistical reports etc

3. Results and Analysis

This step in the research process involves data reduction and data analysis. To start with, data is edited, followed by data coding, classification and tabulation. Such reduced data or edited data is then subjected to various types of statistical analysis. The data are presented as frequency distribution table wherever appropriate.

Chart No 1 : Opinion about cooperation among staff members (Study Group Employees)



Interpretation:

119, 35.95% including 82 male and 37 female respondents said that they somewhat disagree that there is spirit of cooperation among the office staff. 63, 19.05% 41 male and 22 female respondents strongly disagree to the opinion of feeling of cooperation among office staff.

Table No1 : Gender * Opinion about health problem Crosstabulation for Employees

Gender	Work is a Reason for Health Problem		Total
	NO	YES	
Male	54	174	228
Female	21	82	103
Total	75	256	331

Interpretation:

The above table and chart reflect that

- Maximum number that is 256, 77.34% including 174 male and 82 female respondents opined that their work is a cause of health problem for them.
- Only 75, 22.65% including 54 male and 21 female respondents feel that their work is not a reason for their health problem.

Table 2: Opinion on No Job Security as a cause of employee turnover (Study Group: Employees)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Common	195	58.9	58.9	58.9
Common	83	25.1	25.1	84.0
To Some Extent	28	8.5	8.5	92.4
Not so Common	8	2.4	2.4	94.9
Rare	14	4.2	4.2	99.1
Very Rare	1	.3	.3	99.4
Not at all	2	.6	.6	100.0
Total	331	100.0	100.0	

Opinion of Respondents about the Working Environment:

The researcher was interested in finding out what opinion the employees have about their work environment as working condition is one of the important factors as far as the motivation level of the employee is concerned.

Table No 3: Gender * work environment at organization Cross tabulation for Employees

Gender	No Healthy work environment			Total
	Strongly Agree	Some what Agree	Neutral	
male	130	77	21	228
Female	60	35	8	103
Total	190	112	29	331

Interpretation:

- Maximum number 57.4% (130, 39.27% male and 60, and 18.13% female) of respondents opined that the working environment of their organization is not so good.

Clear Sense of Future Direction:

Top managers are charged with the responsibility of providing long-term direction for their organizations, while at the same time balancing the competing interests of key stakeholders. One of the critical errors that some organizations make is that they do not know who they are, how they got to where they are, or where they are going which results into lack of direction at the lower level employees and ultimately the ill effects of it is seen on the development and profit of the company.

Table No 3: Gender * Sense of future direction Crosstabulation for Employees

Gender	Clear Sense of Future Direction				Total
	Some	Neutral	Some	Strongly	

	whatAgree		whatDisagree	Disagree	
Male	1	18	131	78	228
Female	5	11	50	37	103
Total	6	29	181	115	331

Findings

- 1 Work context factors like salary, fringe benefits, company policies and supervisory practices are not the main cause of attrition in call centre but job security was highly rated as the most common factor of attrition by 58.91% respondents. This shows that may be there is a possibility that either the employer are not getting the right skill sets required or the employees are not updated and competent enough to sustain the competition and ready to accept the challenges of the call centre job profile.
- 2 Maximum number 57.4% (130, 39.27% male and 60, and 18.13% female) of respondents opined that the working environment of their organization is not so good
- 3 23.87% respondents said that less chances of career development is to some extent the cause of employee turnover in their organization.

Suggestions

The management of call centers can implement some more time consuming and long run mitigation plans to minimize the impact of employee turnover such that the firm does not face losses on the long term basis. These type of steps or plans may be like:

- * Defining job roles would help in mitigating the effects of employee turnover.
- * Clear documentation of the process and the jobs performed so that the process is not dependent upon an employee.
- * Clear opportunities for advancement and Progression: A clear professional when communicated to employees gives employees an incentive to stick around with the company and fosters employee loyalty, management should implement a career ladder and make sure employees know about it. Also the employees should be made aware of what they must do to earn and go in for career development and advancement.
- * Succession planning for the critical positions in the organization for faster replacement.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for further Research:

The study was conducted for heterogeneous sixteen call centers with a large difference in the employee strength. Call centers with strength of 50 employees and with 4000 employees both were included. Some caution therefore needs to be taken in interpreting the results.

The results of the study are completely based on the responses obtained from the employees working in the call centers at the time when the survey was conducted

Limitations faced by the researcher:

- 1 The call centers maintained a high secrecy as far as their data related to employee turnover is concerned. Even the auditors were not ready to share the information with the researcher.

4. Conclusion

Majority of the problems in the BPO and Call centers are at the lower level / entry level of hierarchy due to the job-characteristics. The business process outsourcing industry mostly caters solution to numerous service related sectors such as airlines, pharmaceuticals, credit card companies, dentists, cellular service companies and cable and internet providers. Call center could provide inbound call center services or outbound services. In outbound process, an agent has to call a potential customer and inform him about the knowhow of a product whereas inbound services deal with incoming calls, emails or SMS services related to a product or services. An outbound call center job could be tediously repetitious owing to the nature of job.

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