

A Study on Stress among employees working in BPO sector with reference to Hyderabad city

N.GIRIDHAR

Research Scholar

Dept. of Commerce

Osmania University

Hyderabad-50007

Email. narule.giridhar@gmail.com

Dr.P.Malyadri

ICSSR Senior Fellow

Centre for Economic and Social studies

Hyderabad-500016

Email. drpm16@gmail.com

Abstract

The job stress of employees in BPO industry had been described in this research paper through empirical investigation. The dependent factor is turnover intention and independent factors are job stress, job perception and organizational attitude. The sample size of this study is 280 and structured questionnaire had been used for collecting primary data. The major finding of this study is that there is job stress among employees in BPO industry but it does not have an impact on turnover intention. This study provides insights for human resource (HR) managers in BPO industry to formulate employee retention strategies.

Keywords: Stress management, employee stress, job stress, job perception, turnover intention, business process outsourcing, BPO, ITES.

Introduction

Most commonly used word and least described word is stress in today's work environment. The level of stress depends on type of industry, position of employee and job roles and responsibilities. Job stress is defined as "A set of psychosocial factors experienced by workers due to work conditions, generated as composite experiences at different levels within an organization." Among environmental factors, job stress is an important determinant of hypertension and is well-studied in developed countries (Babu et al, 2013). Among various segments in India, Business Process

Outsourcing (BPO) industry in information technology enabled services (ITES) sector. The major reasons for global companies for establishing BPOs in India is cost advantage, abundant human resources and infrastructure. Even Indian companies have started outsourcing their services and back end process to BPO organizations. Some of the challenges of India BPO industry are stress management, attrition and shift systems. In this regard the present study is conducted to know about stress management in BPO industry with regard to Hyderabad city.

Objectives of the study

- To identify the problems of employees in BPO sector
- To analyze the impact of demographic characteristics on job stress in BPO industry.
- To know the relationship between job stress and turnover intention in BPO industry.

Hypothesis

H1: There is an association between job perception and turnover intention among employees in BPO industry.

H2: There is an association between job stress and turnover intention among employees in BPO industry.

H3: Organizational attitude of employees has an association with turnover intention among employees in BPO industry.

H4: The gender has an association with job stress among employees in BPO industry.

H5: The marital status has an association with job stress among employees in BPO industry.

Scope of the study

In this research only BPO sector in Hyderabad had been considered. There could be various factors for analyzing job stress among employees in BPO industry but in this study only four variables have been used for describing job stress. The results of this study cannot be generalized because respondents are selected from Hyderabad city and only from BPO industry.

Review of literature

Bhatt and Pathak (2010) had stated that high attrition and absenteeism is observed in information technology (IT) and information technology enabled services (ITES) sector. Such factors lead to creation of employee stress and cause negative psychological consequence. The demographic factors also intensify the level of stress. The enhancement of employee hope in business process outsourcing (BPO) sector can minimize issues like burnout, attrition and stress (Combs et al, 2010).

Organizations need to focus on how to foster organizational commitment, to enhance job satisfaction, reduce job stress and provide support to facilitate employee retention (Rekha and Kamalanabhan, 2010). Alternative job availability influences employee commitment to organization and finally leads to turnover.

D'Cruz and Rayner (2012) had used work harassment scale to verify culture of workplace bullying in Indian BPO sector. It is observed majority of the employees had experienced workplace bullying and it is initiated by superiors by displaying task-focused behavior. Jain and Cooper (2012) had conducted a study in business process outsourcing organizations and mentioned that stress negatively influences organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Offshoring and outsourcing are not recent by-products of the emergence of the new economy in services (D'Cruz and Noronha, 2010). According to Rekha and Kamalanabhan (2010) turnover of employees not only have an effect on organization but it will influence morale of existing employees.

Rai and Tripathi (2017) had opined that empowerment should be provided at the workplace so that the employees can minimize their inter role distance and can increase job involvement. According to Babu et al (2013) Hypertension affects the young urban Indians a decade earlier and there is an impact of autonomy and work environment on hypertension. Kumar and Gopinath (2016) had conducted a survey and mentioned that getting job without experience and attractive life styles are motives for joining in BPO organizations. The primary reasons for leaving BPO sector are job stress and travelling distance followed by too much criticism at workplace. Sharma and Sharma (2014) had used factors like emotional intelligence while describing occupational stress in BPO sector.

Research Gap

Many earlier studies have explained about reasons for high attrition rate in BPO industry, absenteeism in BPO industry, workplace bullying and their impact on organizational citizenship behavior in job involvement. The impact of work stress on health issues like hypertension in BPO industry had also been explained. But there is gap on impact to factors on turnover intention among employees in BPO industry. To fulfill the research gap in the field of research related to BPO sector this study had been conducted.

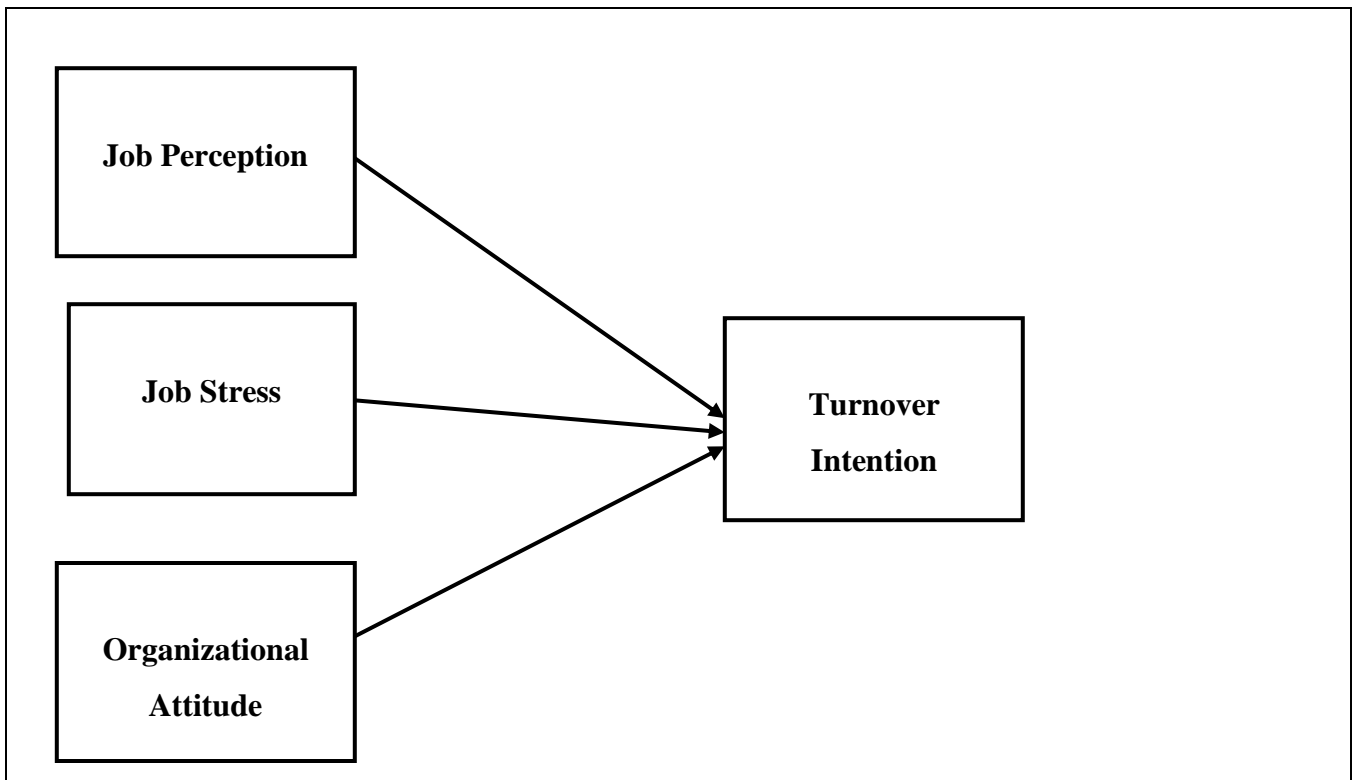
Research Methodology

Structured questionnaire had been used to collect primary data with sample size 280 and sampling method multi stage sampling. In first stage only employees from BPO sector are allowed to participate in the survey. In second stage the employees should be presently working in Hyderabad

city in BPO industry. All the respondents were contacted and survey link had been shared with them. Measurement scale was prepared based on ASSET questionnaire. Cartwright and Cooper (2002) had developed a scale known as ASSET for assessing the stress level among employees. For this research some items are adopted and modified from the ASSET scale. Secondary data had been gathered from books, journals and internet sources.

The research model of the study is shown in Figure 1. The four demographic variables considered in measurement scale are gender, age group, experience and marital status. IN measurement scale four constructs have been developed. The independent variables are job perception, job stress and organizational attitude. The dependent variables is turnover intention and items for all the four constructs are adopted from previous research works and they have been modified as per need of this study. The items under the four constructs are measured with five point Likert-type scale anchored from 5 for strongly agree to 1 for strongly disagree. The statistical techniques like descriptive statistics, regression and one-way ANOVA have been used for testing the hypothesis.

Figure 1: Model of the research study



(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Data Analysis

It is observed from primary and secondary sources of data that BPO employees are experiencing variety of problems. Some major issues faced by employees in BPO sector which cause stress among the employees are:

- Job insecurity
- Work-life balance
- Social issues
- Lack of physical work because of doing work from cabins
- Flat organizational structure
- Night shifts
- Journey from home to office – Travel time
- Long working hours
- Repetitive nature of work
- Excessive monitoring
- Role ambiguity

The total respondents participated in the survey are 280 and out of them 53 percent are male and 47 percent are female. From the dimension of age group 15 percent belong to '21 to 30 Years' age group, 57 percent belong to '31 to 40 Years' age group and remaining 28 percent are belong to 'Over 40 Years' age group. Among the respondents 84 percent are married and 16 percent are unmarried. With regard to overall experience in BPO 12 percent of the respondents are having less than 2 years experience, 36 percent are having '2 to 4 Years' experience and majority 52 percent of the respondents are having 'Above 4 Years' experience.

Descriptive statistics of the four variables had revealed that job percent is having mean value of 3.739 with standard deviation of 0.746. Job stress is having mean value of 3.501 with standard deviation of 0.896. The mean value for organizational attitude is 4.403 with standard deviation of 0.691 and turnover intention is having mean value of 3.150 and 0.854. The organizational attitude is having highest mean value and job stress is having the highest standard deviation. The mean values and standard deviations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

| Variables | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------------|-----|-------|----------------|
| Job Perception | 280 | 3.739 | 0.746 |
| Job Stress | 280 | 3.501 | 0.896 |
| Organizational Attitude | 280 | 4.403 | 0.691 |
| Turnover Intention | 280 | 3.150 | 0.854 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 280 | | |

(Source: Output from SPSS)

H1: There is an association between job perception and turnover intention among employees in BPO industry.

Result: According to Table 2 the p-value for job perception is less than 0.05 therefore H1 is accepted. Hence there is significant relationship between job perception and turnover intention but beta value is negative.

Table 2: Regression Coefficients^a

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 4.663 | 0.127 | | 36.689 | 0.000 |
| 1 Job Perception | -0.158 | 0.017 | -0.580 | -9.094 | 0.000 |
| 1 Job Stress | 0.023 | 0.013 | 0.101 | 1.745 | 0.082 |
| 1 Organizational Attitude | -0.025 | 0.018 | -0.085 | -1.389 | 0.166 |

a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention

(Source: Output from SPSS)

H2: There is an association between job stress and turnover intention among employees in BPO industry.

Result: The p-value for job stress is more than 0.05 as per Table 2 therefore H2 is rejected. It means job stress does not have an association with turnover intention.

H3: Organizational attitude of employees has an association with turnover intention among employees in BPO industry.

Result: The p-value for organizational attitude is more than 0.05 as per Table 2. Hence H3 is rejected which means organizational attitude does not have an association with turnover intention.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA between Gender, Marital and Job Stress

| Dependent Variable | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
| Gender | Between Groups | 46.624 | 1 | 46.624 | 72.983 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 177.597 | 278 | 0.639 | | |
| | Total | 224.222 | 279 | | | |
| Marital Status | Between Groups | 3.149 | 1 | 3.149 | 3.960 | 0.048 |
| | Within Groups | 221.073 | 278 | 0.795 | | |
| | Total | 224.222 | 279 | | | |

(Source: Compiled from output of SPSS)

H4: The gender has an association with job stress among employees in BPO industry.

Result: The p-value for gender is less than 0.05 as per table 3. Hence H4 is accepted which means gender has an association with job stress in BPO industry.

H5: The marital status has an association with job stress among employees in BPO industry.

Result: The p-value for marital status is less than 0.05 as per table 3, therefore H5 is accepted which means marital status of an employee has an association with job stress in BPO industry.

Discussion and Conclusion

It is found from this study the major problem for employees in BPO sector is work stress and unrealistic targets. Even though incentives are provide for achieving targets but work stress increases when sometimes targets are not attained. Sometimes the social life is missed because the pattern of holidays is different compared to traditional organizations. Job stress had been observed among employees in BPO sector in Hyderabad. The turnover intention is not influenced by job stress among the employees in BPO sector. Many of the previous studies have mentioned that job stress leads to turnover intention. Hence there could be many reasons for high attrition in BPO industry but job stress is only one of the factors to influence employees. It is observed that demographic characteristics like marital status and gender has an influence on job stress in BPO industry.

Suggestions

- Employee wellness programs must be implemented for reducing work stress.
- Employee must be given incentives for maintaining appropriate weight and healthy food habits.
- Personality development programs must be conducted to increase emotional intelligence levels to cope up with stress.
- Career counseling facility should be made available so that employees.
- The employees should be encouraged to take breaks for every two hours to release their stress.

Future Research

In this study only four variables have been considered to describe the stress among employees and its impact on turnover intention. Future researchers can consider other factors like shift timings, compensation and work-life balance for describing stress in BPO sector. Employee behavior towards yoga and meditation in BPO industry can also be considered for future research. The techniques followed by employees in BPO industry for managing work stress can also be described in future. Similar studies can also be conducted in other cities of India and the results can be compared to get overall knowledge of stress management in Indian BPO industry.

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