

Causes of High Attrition - A Study of Call Centre Units Located in Pune City with special reference to Female Employees

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Abstract:

While 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. 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, professional factors, 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. Any method of controlling attrition or increasing retention should be based on a good understanding of the factors leading to attrition. The factors may be at times very simple and could be revealed by answering simple questions like – where is the attrition occurring? Is it more in males than females? What level? Is there anything common among people who leave etc. Once the cause of attrition is identified, solving the problem becomes relatively easy. At least the organization can then determine if any internal interventions will help reduce attrition.

Key Words: Call centre, job satisfaction, Attrition rate, Job content factors, job context factors, causes of attrition.

1. INTRODUCTION

The most important and crucial resource on which the information technology and information technology enabled services (IT & ITES) industry in India depends is the Human Capital. No doubt that India has location advantage but the factor which has made the country's immensely successful in the overseas market, is its abundant and cost

effective human capital. This Key asset of human capital has helped India sustain its edge in the ITES Sector. ITES is a market that offers tremendous opportunity for growth. A wide variety of industries are seeking alternative means of operation because of the changing approaches to business and consumer needs (Holds worth & Cartwright, 2003). Customers expect and even demand 24 hours electronic service, which has resulted in an exceptional increase in service-based Call Centre's.

The information technology enabled service industry; BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) played a big employment generator since 2003. On one hand the challenge faced by the HR Manager of BPO firms was to bridge the ever increasing demand and supply gap of professionals and on the other hand to find the kind of people who can keep pace with the unique characteristic work pattern in this industry. Employees no doubt would love their job, unconditionally like their co-workers, dedicatedly work hard for their employers, get paid well for their work, have good chances of promotion and advancement and experience a complete job satisfaction and never ever think to quit from the organization, but when we deal in the real world, in the real world employees do leave their jobs either because they want more money, hate their working conditions, dislike their co-workers, want a change, or because their spouse gets a dream job in another state. All this can and does lead to higher employee turnover in the organization.

The current scenario has experienced that people frequently jump from one job to another as an HR Manager, one may be able to find out which company an employee may be joining, but main question that why people don't stick to one company remains unanswered. This slow decrease in the employee strength of company is known as attrition. The books say attrition is a gradual diminution in the membership or employee strength because of constant stress or job dissatisfaction. It is a gradual natural reduction in the membership or personnel as a result of retirement, resignation or death of the employee(s).

In a more broader hemisphere Human Resource professionals all over the world, working in the call centre or BPO industry are leaving no stone unturned to understand the cause

of this employee turnover and formulate strategies to retain human capital, but in spite of all the trials the average attrition rate in the call centre is a cause of worry for many. The researcher has taken up the current study to find out the causes of high attrition in the selected call centers located in Pune region and to suggest strategies to help organizations arrest the attrition problem.

Purpose of the Study:

Any method of controlling attrition or increasing retention should be based on a good understanding of the factors leading to attrition. The factors may be at times very simple and could be revealed by an examination of the statistical data. The statistical data could answer simple questions like – where is the attrition occurring? Is it more in males than females? What level? Is there anything common among people who leave etc. Once the cause of attrition is identified, solving the problem becomes relatively easy. At least the organization can then determine if any internal interventions will help reduce attrition.

In the current study the researcher wish to come up with the key reasons for attrition in the call center's located in the Pune region and measures to arrest the attrition problem. The reason behind choosing call centre segment of BPO is, customer care based call centre activities constitute for more than one third of the total employment and revenue in the BPO segment (Babu P Ramesh, 2004)

Literature Review:

Individuals employed to work in a Call Center and deal with the customer's concerns and requests telephonically are called as the Call Centre Representative. According to Rose and Wright (2005), Call Centre representatives are generally associated with low level of satisfaction because their work is fairly low skilled and they claim that there is sociological research evidence showing that low-skilled work does not result in intrinsic satisfaction as a result employees are left no option but to seek satisfaction through pay and other compensatory mechanisms.

The researcher reviewed literature to understand the evolution and growth of BPO industry and especially the call centre in India, the various factors related to job content (intrinsic factors) and job context (extrinsic factors) which may instigate an individual to move from one job to other causing attrition or employee turnover in an organization. Literature on the various types of costs associated with attrition was also reviewed by the researcher. Literature review was mainly done to understand the past trends related to attrition in call centers.

Objectives of the Study:

The research objectives were

1. To find out the attrition percentage of female employees of selected call centres.

Attrition in call centers could be the result of either employer's policy/ policies or due to the host of insecurities and vulnerabilities associated with the taking up of a career with a call center. The nature of job in a typical call center is psychologically very stressful. Thus the first objective was to figure out the attrition rate percentage of female employees to understand if female employees are finding the job comfortable or not.

2. To find out which of the work content and work context factors are the cause for attrition among female employees of the selected call centers.

The researcher intended to find out whether the attrition is the result of work content related factors like job security, adequate salary, working conditions, Company policies, Relation with Supervisors etc; or if it is the result of work context related factors like Career development and advancement, responsibility, Recognition, Monotonous work, Achievement etc.

3. To come up with opinions and suggestions for arresting and reducing the attrition rate in call centers.

Methodology:

The methodology adopted for collection of data was the survey method. Two types of data were collected by the researcher- Primary Data and Secondary Data.

Primary Data:

Primary Data was collected with the help of questionnaire consisting to both open ended as well as close ended questions. using Non-Probability accidental sampling technique to collect responses to the questionnaire. Data related to employee strength, period of work, job satisfaction related to factors of work content and work context, current rate of attrition felt by the company was collected with the help of questionnaire.

Secondary Data:

- 1) Information regarding BPO’s and call centers located in pune region was obtained from the IT Directory of MCCIA, Pune and from the just-dial website www.justdial.com.
- 2) Various websites and search engines were used on the internet to collect data related to the evolution and growth in economic sector and service industry with special reference to call center units.
- 3) Data was also obtained from books and News paper articles.
- 4) Trade magazines, Journals and online publications were also made use of for obtaining the required data.

Data Analysis:

The data collected through the questionnaire was analyzed and presented as frequency distribution table wherever appropriate.

Table 1-A: Gender * Age Crosstabulation
Count

		Age			Total
		20 to 22 years	22 to 24 years	24 to 26 years	
Gender	male	23	132	73	228
	Female	6	59	38	103

Total	29	191	111	331
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Table No 2-A: Gender * Tenure of Service Crosstabulation

Count

		Tenure of Service				Total
		6 months to 12 months	12 to 18 months	18 to 24 months	more than 24 months	
Gender	male	20	119	75	14	228
	Female	11	43	41	8	103
Total		31	162	116	22	331

Table No 3-A: Gender * Respect and fair treatment priority in office Crosstabulation

Count

		Respect and fair treatment priority in office				Total
		some what agree	neutral	some what disagree	strongly disagree	
Gender	male	62	33	91	42	228
	Female	31	10	38	24	103
Total		93	43	129	66	331

Table No 4A: Gender * reasonable work load and expected completion time Crosstabulation

Count

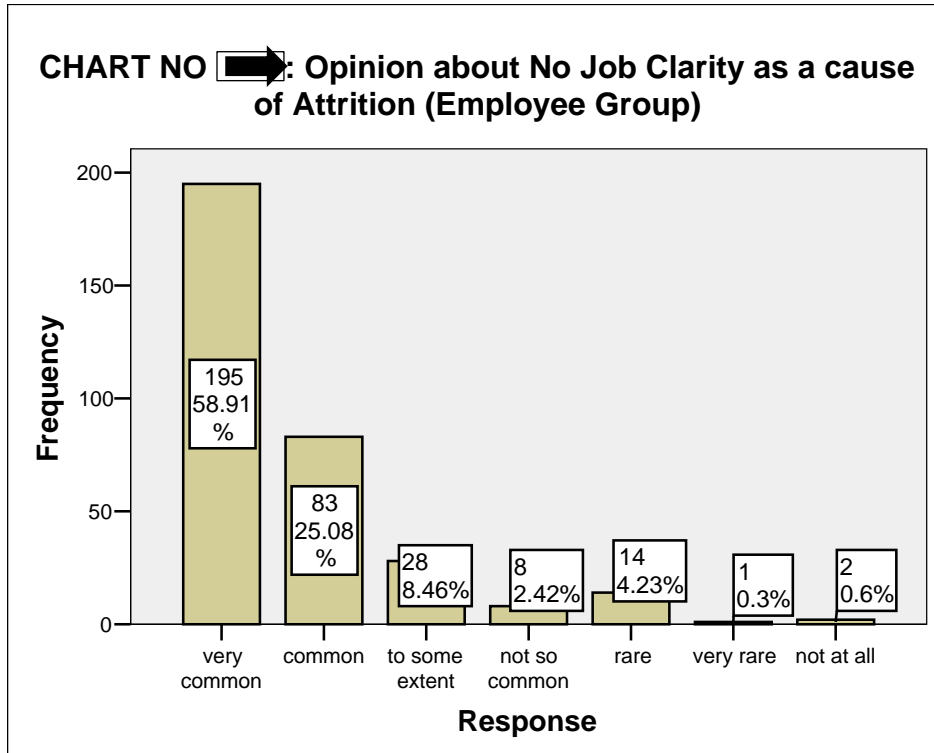
		reasonable work load and expected completion time				Total
		some what agree	neutral	some what disagree	strongly disagree	
Gender	male	4	24	119	81	228
	Female	1	19	45	38	103
Total		5	43	164	119	331

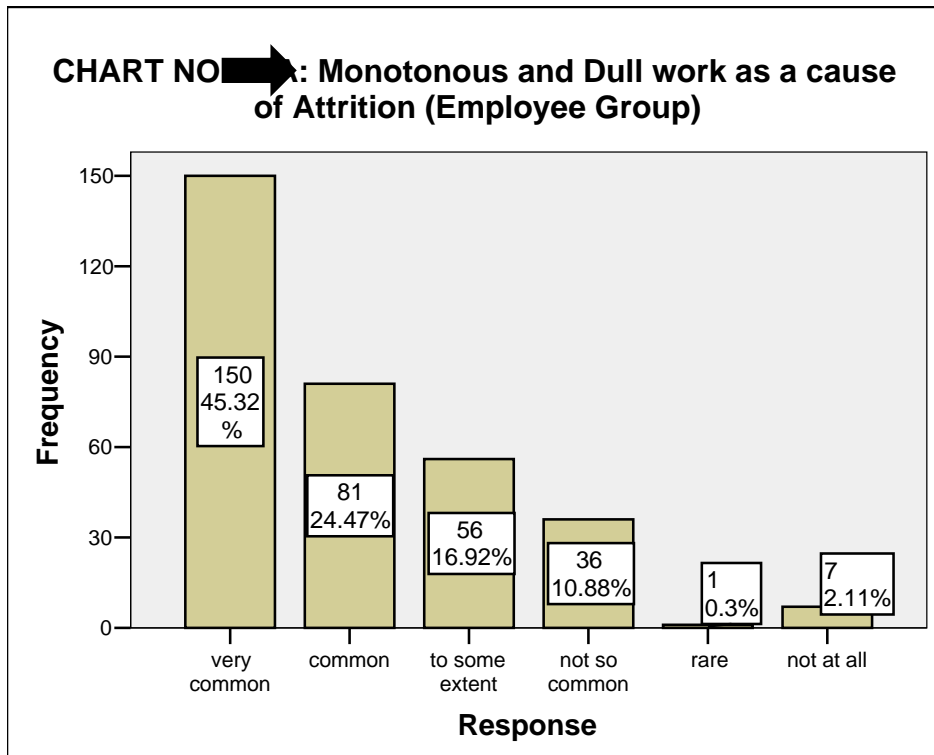
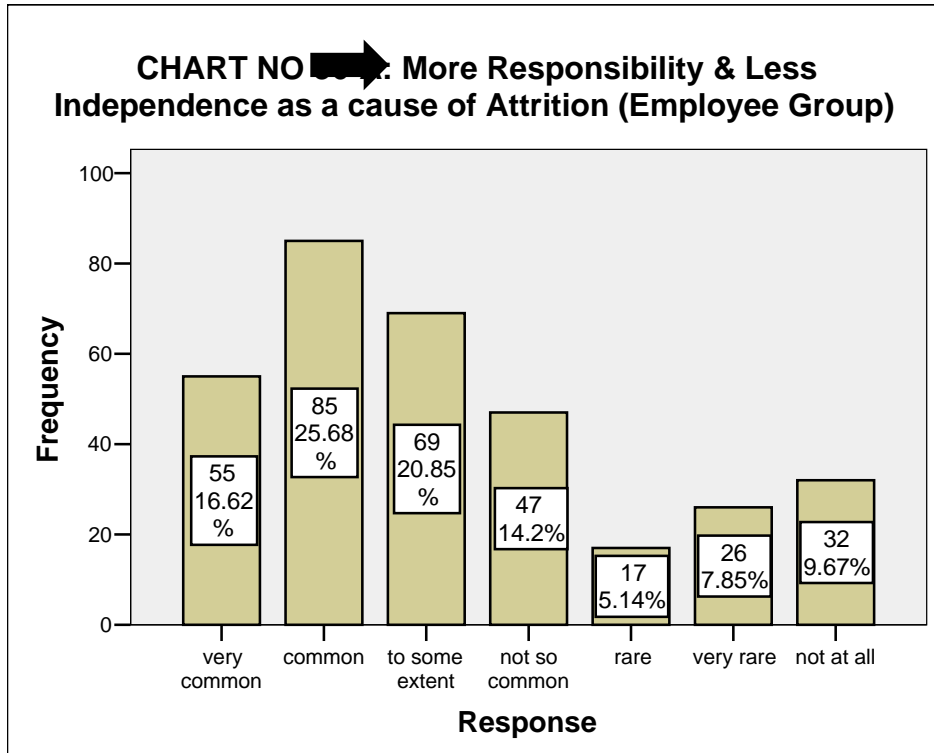
Table No 5-A: Gender * Think often to change job Crosstabulation

Count

		Think often to change job	Total
		Yes	

Gender	Male	228	228
	Female	103	103
Total		331	331





Findings of the Study:

1. Attrition percentage of female employees prevailing in the selected call centers

Some people have a high need of variety. They get bored and fatigued easily. They need to change their job at periodic intervals. Some people are constantly searching and seeking, they are highly ambitious and restless. Some are highly achievement driven and want to achieve new heights in the shortest time. Some may have a different motivation or value profile which may not be matched by their current job or company, need for being close with family, spouse, children, parents. At different stages of one's life to fulfill different types of affiliation needs individuals make decisions to leave their jobs and make a move from one organization to another. Attrition rate was reflected as minimum 13% to maximum 40 % for the year 2015-16 and 2016-17 as per the opinion of the respondents

2. Causes of Attrition

On asking the respondents to mark the most common cause of attrition in their organization from the list of work content and work context factors 56.6% (214 respondents) pointed working conditions as the main cause. 52.4% (198 respondents) said that monotonous and dull work is a cause of attrition in their organization.

Suggestions:

- 1** Organizations should provide a safe and secured workplace to all the employees and transparency and objectivity in performance management, compensation and promotion policies to build and maintain confidence.
- 2** The attitude towards call center is quite negative. It is treated as a clerical job with a low profile. It has an easy opening and easy money but the dignity is missing. There should be a radical change in the organization structure and growth prospects, odd timings etc should be taken care off.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for further Research:

The results of the study are completely based on the responses obtained from the employees currently working in the call centers as call center representatives and managers as well as few ex-employee(s). No exit interview detail was referred as the management of the organization was not willing to share it.

Conclusion:

Working in call center is lucrative and full of opportunities but what most of actually avoid or simply miss out is the fact about the stress factor involved in jobs of call centers. From rude customers to rigorous quality measures adapted by call center management, call center agents have to face deep down stress and mounting pressure of work.

Handling thousands of calls under the quality monitoring checks is no Childs play and the racism and insults from the customers make the whole thing worse and instigates an individual to look for a new job resulting into attrition.

As the study shows the employee attrition in the selected call centers is related to salary and working conditions as validated by the hypothesis the researcher concludes that in spite of hefty pay packets and better working conditions the attrition rate of call center employees continues to be high.

I hope this study will help bring to the forefront some concerns of employees working in Indian outsourcing firms and that the issues explored in this study will provide an impetus for future research to academicians and insights to practitioners about various issues faced by the employees in outsourcing firms.

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