

A Study on the Life Style of BPO Employees in Ahmedabad

Dixita Dhanesha

PhD Scholar, Pacific University, Ahmadabad, Gujarat, India

Abstract: Employees are the building blocks who contribute for growth of the organization. The major problems that influence employees are work stress, organization values and performance extraction by the organization. Majorly service to the customers becomes the trademark of success and that drives to focus on the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) in the organization. In current business scenario, work done by the BPO service is increased and in turns increases the number of employees in the organization. This overall strategy drives the employees to boost up their potential and contribution towards the organization. On the other hand, employees are struggled to do their work which increases work stress, job alienation, and mental pressure. The research deals with life style as personal issues, BPO culture, family background, skills, communication, health and sexual knowledge of young BPO employees of the organization in Ahmedabad. The result of this paper is an emerged analyze of the major components that impact the life style of the young BPO employees in Ahmadabad City.

I. INTRODUCTION

The world is in the middle of the third era of globalization. The economy in India has been developing apace since 1990. Rapid growth of globalization is of the reason of business process outsourcing sector. Over the past decades, Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) and business process outsourcing segments were particularly growing with a high rate which is important study to be considered. This impact of globalization has driven the organization to concentrate more that pay ways to cost-efficient business models. India is a nation of enriched youth population which remarks India as an extending destination for the location of outsource services. Thus it is not so difficult to meet the youth resource needs for the upgrading BPO industry. It can involve the transfer of an entire business function to a supplier; or alternatively, it may lead to the transfer of some activities associated with the function whilst some are retained in-house. India is one of the hottest destinations for Business process outsourcing and has to its name a host of fortune 500 and fortune 1000 companies that have set up their BPO units here. India BPO outsourcing is at present seeing a huge expansion with many companies moving up the value chain to provide low end as well as high end BPO services that include Knowledge services.

Most BPO vendors in India are now in a position to handle an entire BPO process on their own. Let us look at some advantages of India BPO outsourcing; India has a relatively cheaper workforce as compared to any other nation Indian workforce is well educated, computer savvy and has good English speaking skills. India has a good communications and internet infrastructure. The Indian Government is very supportive of foreign investments and has devised many investment friendly laws and taxes. Individual State Governments in India are constantly developing their IT and networking infrastructure in order to attract more BPO investment. India has many quality certified software firms and agencies that act as BPO vendors. These are the very reasons why India and it outsourcing are considered synonymous and the Indian BPO outsourcing market is booming at such a great speed and is estimated to grow even more. The BPO market has grown by huge proportions in the recent years but there has been an increased backlash against BPO in the US and UK. The primary step in this regard taken by the US senate was to stop federal government outsourcing by the treasury and transport departments. According to recent estimates by Assoc ham-IDC, the BPO market is expected to reach a huge \$1 trillion by the year 2012 with US alone accounting for about 60% of the market. An estimate that sure seems to be coming true looking at the way companies is competition among them to outsource business processes.

BPO sector is treated to be the most preferable destination for the youngster to be employment. About 70% of the total youngster population tracking towards BPO sector in India. But it is noted to be surprised that youngster in BPO sector cannot resist for long period in BPO sector. The background research quoted the reason behind the above is the outcome after working as 32% sleep disorder, 25% digestive disorder and 20% eye-sight problem to the employees [1]. Scope of study makes the research work more meaningful. As there are a number of BPOs in Mumbai itself and they are working in

the diverse field like Technical Process Outsourcing (TPO), Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO), Legal Process Outsourcing (LPO), customer support, insurance processing, telemarketing, IT help desk and so on, hence need felt to limit the study on general BPO working in the field of customer support services which are inbound call centers. They take calls on behalf of their clients at faraway places may be of United States of America and United Kingdom.

II. Literature Survey

Multinational Corporations (MNC"s) have handled to distinguish various countries worldwide to outsource their non-core competencies abroad, to keep track more on how to improve themselves in a better way than others and profitability. India is one of the contributing countries to capture foreign business activities in the past two decades. This has to be the result of multiple components that makes the country an enchanting choice for outsourcing by MNCs [2]. A brief review of the research made in the concept of outsourcing in India is presented based on sample survey of BPO employees, presented that more than 61% of the responders under the research results that the appraisal system in BPOs was transparent and approximately fewer than 55% results that it was fair and more than 63% gave thumbs up to the fact that special initiatives and efforts were duly recognized at the time of appraisal.

The information technology and ITES-BPO industry in India has developed rapidly, registering a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 26% over the last decade. The number of information technology and ITES/BPO employees employed in India increased from 284,000 in between 1999 and 2000 to over 1.6 million in 2006-07 and has been quantitated by Government of India, Department of Information and Technology along with 70% of workforce in the age group 26-35 years. The IT and ITES sectors happens to be one of the largest youngster working as employers in India. At this stage Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune and Kolkata valued as 90% of the total recruited and working in the BPO sector. The most work of the BPO sector employees are data entry and analysis, audit checks, payment processing services, maintenance works and customer care services. In other words, each BPO employee should have attended a minimum of 100 phone calls per shift [4].

There is always rapid growing framework employed in various sectors, including about the health and safety of young BPO employees, and the government. The Health Ministry is considering in issuing guidelines for employees in these sector. However, the lack of reliable information on which to base a response to such concerns poses a challenge to safeguarding the health of these young professionals.

III. Methodology

A. Study setting

The research, executed in 2014, was located in Ahmedabad, one of India's major BPO hubs. More or even 38 Indian and international BPOs operating in Ahmedabad, of which 19 BPO service for international clients.

B. Methodology

The research has been conducted in four international BPO companies, which were selected randomly with some constrains basis of possibility. Initially, communication has to be established for all 15 BPO companies in Ahmedabad. Only 9 companies have responded and 4 companies accepted to allow our study about their employees. For the convenience, 2 companies have selected and these both companies are headquartered in the United States, which contribute maintenance service and customer care services majorly to their clients. These employees have been working with 3 shifts at unique timing for each company respectively. Then the companies which rejects our study has been studied and the reason behind rejection is found and it prolongs as type of questionnaires might considered being sensitive, company was not willing to essence their workspace, or the management did not appreciate the research to be processed as it might end up with open eyed employees.

The study consists of qualitative and quantitative phase. In qualitative phase, 10 keyed entropy analysis (KEAs) were to be conducted in the two selected BPO companies with human resource managers, communication trainers, team leaders, senior customer service representatives and business analysts to evolve their sensing ability that employment in the BPO sector focus in the lives of young adults. In quantitative phase, a cross-sectional survey was executed for both young male and female employees in the two BPO companies. The questionnaire enveloped a range of domains including employees' family background, nature of association with their parents, self-efficacy after joining the BPO, interaction with peers, self-esteem and knowledge of reproductive and sexual health issues, attitudes towards sexuality, sexual experiences and other

factors of components in sexual desire. The questionnaire were prepared in both English and local language in Ahmedabad city, it helped for effective results and their inner voice and thoughts that framed out in questionnaire and the personal results were kept confidential and also it was assured to the employees.

| | BPO 1 | BPO 2 | Total |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| No. of questionnaires distributed to team leaders | | | |
| Young men | 400 | 900 | 1,300 |
| Young women | 400 | 900 | 1,300 |
| Total | 800 | 1,800 | 2,600 |
| No. of completed questionnaires | | | |
| Young men | 260 | 652 | 912 |
| Young women | 275 | 692 | 967 |
| Total | 535 | 1344 | 1879 |
| Response rate (%) | | | |
| Young men | 65 | 72.4 | 70.1 |
| Young women | 68.7 | 76.8 | 74.3 |
| Total | 66.8 | 74.6 | 72.2 |

C. Socio-demographic characteristics

The table below indicates that the mean age of respondents was 24 years and again young women rather to be linearly older than young men; about 63 percent of young women were compared to 57 percent of young men who were between the age group 23-25 years. The study has proved that all respondents had finished undergraduate degree, which considered being gateway to get employed in BPO. Though, 64 percent of both young women and men were reported that they had finished only a general undergraduate degree, only one-third of youth adult had finished in addition, a post-graduate degree/diploma. The study had also dealt with family’s economic status and questionnaires had framed with middle class and lower middle class. The result of this study determines that the majority of young educated workforce conveyed that they were from lower middle class families and around 20 percent conveyed that they were from middle class families. The huge majority of young men and women conveyed that both parents were alive.

| Characteristic | Young men | Young women |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Age (%) | | |
| 20-21 | 8.6 | 5.2 |
| 21-23 | 34.4 | 31.7 |
| 23-25 | 57.3 | 63.7 |
| Education | | |
| Undergraduate degree | 64.5 | 61.8 |
| Professional diploma | 15.4 | 19.3 |
| Post-graduate | 17.7 | 16.3 |
| Family’s economic status | | |
| Middle class | 19.5 | 15.6 |
| Lower middle class | 82.5 | 86.2 |
| Parents’ survival status | | |
| Both parents alive | 91.4 | 91.7 |

D. Work history

The study researched respondents’ working history and their experiences of working in current BPO sector which also includes the reasons behind why they had started the carrier in BPO sector, and what they felt advantage and disadvantage most about their current BPO job. The result is presented in the table below, show that most young BPO employees had started working at age 22. However, 18 percent of young men, as compared to 14 percent of young women, had started working early, that is, before age 21. Around 40 percent of respondents explored that their current job was their first job. Gender differences were evident with regard to young people’s employment history in the BPO sector. Young men were far more likely than young women to have worked in more than one BPO company. Moreover, though equal ratios of young men and women had worked for about one year in the BPO sector, a considerably larger proportion of young women than young men had worked in the sector for more than three years. The result of study suggesting that young men were more interested than young women to have worked for multiple BPO companies but had worked for shorter periods suggest that young men were more mobile than young women in the BPO sector.

Though gender differences were wide, the major reason for joining a BPO company viewed by most young adults was the high starting salary paid in this sector. Other reasons were enquired fewer young adults had different vision as job prospects as the leading reason. Not surprisingly, the most appreciating aspect of their current BPO job, identified by both young men and young women, was also the high salary and the gradual increment in the salary. Other appealing aspects of their current job were the working environment and the nature of work in the BPO Company and perks of the job. Both young men and women also referred transport facilities. Young men and women referred different aspects of their current job they most disliked. Young men were more likely to report inconvenient duty shifts and job insecurity while young women tended to cite pressure to meet ambitious targets as well as inconvenient duty hours as the main drawbacks of their current job.

| Reasons | Young men | Young women |
|--|------------------|--------------------|
| Main reasons for joining | | |
| High starting salary | 71.3 | 78.1 |
| Job prospects | 25.8 | 39.6 |
| Transport facility | 18.5 | 26.5 |
| Exciting work | 11.8 | 13.6 |
| Convenient duty shifts | 7.3 | 5.4 |
| Recreational facilities | 2.9 | 9.4 |
| Views about the current BPO job | | |
| Most appealing aspects | 66.4 | 77.9 |
| Salary | 42.4 | 57.4 |
| Work environment | 28.5 | 20.1 |
| Perks | 27.9 | 21.4 |
| Interesting work | 23.5 | 32.6 |
| Good transport facility | 23.6 | 26.2 |
| On-the-job training | 11.7 | 13.2 |
| Convenient duty shifts | 7.4 | 12.1 |
| Recreational facilities | 9.4 | 8.3 |
| Least appealing aspects | | |
| Inconvenient duty shifts | 45.3 | 28.5 |
| Job insecurity | 33.5 | 25.7 |
| Work pressure | 17.3 | 44.1 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------|------|
| Work environment | 16.3 | 3.1 |
| Lack of recreational facilities | 15.3 | 18.3 |
| Poor transport facilities | 11.7 | 5.8 |
| Inadequate perks | 4.3 | 8.2 |
| Poor salary | 2.4 | 7.7 |
| Inadequate on-the-job training | 1.5 | 2.6 |

E. Residence patterns

The study submits the young professionals’ patterns of residence before and after joining the current BPO Company are presented in table below. The majority of BPO employees preferred to reside on their own or with friends/colleagues in a rented basis accommodation. An important report to be noted is that a quantitatively larger proportion of young women than young men were away from their parental homes to live independently after joining the current BPO. While approximately 16 percent of young women were living away from their parental homes before working in the current company, after employment, there is huge increment in the proportion of young women living independently were calculated as 62 percent. On other hand, one-third of young men were already staying on their own or with friends/colleagues before joining the current company; following employment in the company, there is also an increment in proportion of young men staying independently and that last to 62 percent. Thus the result exposed that, the gender differences in domain of residence patterns apparent prior to employment in the BPO had completely collapsed in BPO cultured employment.

| Residence | Young men | | Young women | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Pre-employment in current BPO | Post-employment in current BPO | Pre-employment in current BPO | Post-employment in current BPO |
| Living with one or both parents | 47.4 | 29.5 | 83.4 | 31.6 |
| Living with relatives | 14.3 | 8.3 | 5.9 | 37.5 |
| Living with friends/colleagues | 27.4 | 39.3 | 2.6 | 36.9 |
| Living alone | 9.4 | 24.1 | 11.9 | 22.9 |

Although from the study, BPO employees noted that they spent few time with their parents at the time of getting into the company as compared to when years were counting up, many young adults started to share a close and understanding relationship with their parents. Young women in turns were more attractive than young men to bind close family interaction. For the consideration, 24 percent of young women as compared to 14 percent of young men reported that their parents were spending a lot of time with them, and 64 percent and 38 percent respectively, reported that their parents were very friendly and understanding their vision and mission. An important study results that two-fifths of young women, as compared to 14 percent of young men, spending their salary for their families linearly. The result evidence explores on parent-child relationships in India suggests that parents were not sure of social activities in which youth tend to participate, particularly those involving friends or members of the opposite sex [6]. The key result from our study indicates that parents were fairly tolerant of youth friendships and social activities. More than 90 percent of young men and more than 80 percent

of young women, for the consideration, perceived that their parents would not disapprove of their friendships with opposite-sex colleagues or if they attended parties with both male and female friends.

Similarly, most respondents reported that their parents would not angry if they had a love marriage or if they went to see a film with an opposite-sex friend. Young women were, ultimately more attractive than young men to note the sensation of parental disapproval in reference to most themes. For the consideration, 16 percent of young women as compared to 11 percent of young men represented expecting parental disapproval if they were friendly with an opposite sex colleague, and 34 percent of young women as compared to 14 percent of young men represented that their parents would disapprove of them having a boyfriend/girlfriend. A similar frame was noted in the case of mothers' or fathers' reactions to young women and young men going out with opposite-sex friends to watch a film. More number of young women than young men expected parental disapproval if they had a love marriage.

| Perceptions of parental reactions | Young men | Young women |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| Parents would disapprove if respondent | | |
| Was friendly with opposite-sex colleagues | 9.4 | 17.4 |
| Went to parties with both male and female friends | 9.9 | 21.3 |
| Had a girl/boy friend | 11.5 | 34.9 |
| Mother would be angry if respondent | | |
| Went to see a film with an opposite-sex friend | 16.8 | 26.9 |
| Had a love marriage | 17.7 | 27.7 |
| Father would be angry if respondent | | |
| Went to see a film with an opposite-sex friend | 18.4 | 36.7 |
| Had a love marriage | 22.3 | 29.4 |

F. Peer behaviors

BPO employees were questioned about peer behaviors, including substance use among peers and the sexual experiences of their peers. Most young adults came out that they had friends who smoked and consumed alcohol, had experienced a romantic partnership and had engaged in premarital sex. Gender differences were evident for all peer behaviors probed. Almost all young men reported that they had at least one friend who smoked or consumed alcohol; in contrast, fewer young women reported friends who smoked or consumed alcohol. Almost all young men and women reported friends who had a romantic partner; however, significantly more young men than young women noted that at least one friend had engaged in premarital sex.

G. Support networks

Respondents were questioned about the person with whom they felt more ease to discuss their personal matters, opposite-sex relationships and work issues. Not surprisingly, given the result of study that most BPO employees were not living with their parents, both young men and young women denoted friends/colleagues as their source confidante on all these issues. Gender differences were evident, with significantly more young men than women denoting friends/colleagues as their source confidante with whom they discussed these issues. Amongst family-level confidantes, the data is interesting to note

that while young men and young women were more likely to be comfort in sharing personal problems with their mother than with their father, more respondents denoted sharing work-related problems with their father than that of mother.

H. Individual competencies

Individual concepts holds the research close as it discusses employees’ perceptions of changes in their individual competencies, including their self-efficacy, communication skills, after making the changeover to employment in a BPO. It also to describe about the young adults’ perceptions of their current soft skills and their assertiveness in reproductive and sexual health matters. Although two-thirds of respondents referred being more stressed after joining a BPO, study results as that indicate that large proportions of both young men and young women agreed working in the BPO sector had amended their communication skills and their self-efficacy. Gender differences were specific for most indicators of self-efficacy, with young women rather more likely than young men to attribute these changes to employment in a BPO. These findings are not actually implied that young women working in the BPO were more assertive and confident than young men. Rather, they suggest that BPO employment was a major factor in enhancing young women’s self-efficacy. It was less to be a major factor for young men who have traditionally had more opportunities to develop self-efficacy, and therefore, presumably higher pre-employment levels of self-efficacy. The gender differences were apparent. Significantly more young women than young men agreed that after working in the BPO sector, they were more independent, confident, more assertive, and more responsible more outgoing, as well as better able to resolve problems and manage their time.

| | Young men | Young women |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| Communication Skills | | |
| Better able to communicate | 86.3 | 83.4 |
| Self-efficacy | | |
| More stressed | 66.6 | 65.3 |
| More independent | 86.3 | 91.4 |
| More Confident | 75.3 | 87.4 |
| More assertive | 68.4 | 88.4 |
| More responsible | 66.3 | 85.3 |
| Better able to resolve problems | 55.3 | 76.3 |
| Better able to manage time | 53.6 | 78.4 |
| More outgoing | 55.3 | 69.3 |
| Negotiation skills | | |
| Express an opinion to elders | 38.4 | 47.5 |
| Confront a person with whom they disagreed | 46.4 | 56.3 |
| Tell their parents if they do not want to marry the partner chosen by their parents | 61.4 | 73.4 |
| Savings pattern | | |
| No savings | 10.3 | 6.3 |
| Formal savings | 75.2 | 89.3 |
| Informal savings | 23.5 | 15.3 |

Nevertheless, even when it is asked to discuss their soft skills, decision making and degree of tolerance, young women were significantly more likely than young men to represent confidence in their ability to express an opinion to elders; confront a person with whom they disagreed; and even to negotiate with their parents to disagree the marriage arranged by their parents. Although most employees perceived that employment in the BPO sector had made them more assertive and

independent. The findings indicate that substantial proportions of young people were not confident or comfortable accessing reproductive health services or approaching health care providers. For the consideration, only half of young men and one fifth percent of young women felt comfortable buying contraceptives from a medical store. Fewer young men than young women represented being comfortable in discussing contraceptives with an adult or health provider.

As many as 90 percent or more young people, irrespective of gender, reported that they were able to save some money and most reported that they invested their savings either in individual bank accounts or fixed deposits. Significantly more young women than young men so reported. Moreover, significantly fewer young women than men reported that they kept their savings at home or gave their savings to their parents or others for safekeeping.

| Reproductive and sexual health matters | Young men | Young women |
|--|------------------|--------------------|
| A women can get pregnant at first sexual intercourse | 56.3 | 49.3 |
| Condoms protect against HIV | 80.3 | 93.5 |
| Condoms prevent pregnancy | 82.4 | 87.5 |
| Withdrawal prevents pregnancy | 54.6 | 30.5 |
| HIV is not transmitted by kissing an HIV-positive person | 75.3 | 79.3 |

Health matters

Many studies in India have highlighted young people’s relatively low levels of awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues [7] [8]. This section discusses BPO employees’ awareness of selected issues relating to pregnancy, contraception and the transmission of HIV.

| Physical intimacy | Young men | Young women |
|------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Kissed partner | 68.4 | 63.6 |
| Touched partner’s private parts | 54.6 | 49.4 |
| Had sexual relations with partners | 49.4 | 37.4 |

Young adults were asked whether they agreed/disagreed with four statements on pregnancy and contraception, and the modes of HIV transmission. It is interesting to note that although all the study participants were educated professionals, they lacked in-depth knowledge of sexual and reproductive health matters. For the consideration, only about half of both young men and young women were extremely aware and secure that a woman can get pregnant at first sexual intercourse. Misconceptions about the modes of transmission of HIV were prevalent; 25 percent of young men and approximately 20 percent of women believed that one can acquire HIV by kissing a person with HIV. In general, more young women than young men were aware about most pregnancy-related issues, including with regard to oral pills as a method to prevent pregnancy and the role of the condom in preventing pregnancy and protecting against HIV.

Conclusions

The study was conducted among unmarried young BPO employees in Ahmedabad. All the study responders had at least undergraduate degree; most were living away from their families and among them, the quality and response of majority employees is considered to be result of the study. From these aspects, the sample of young employees in this study have proven that particularly young women is very different from youth employees of other domains or just considering more general youngster in India.

REFERENCES

- [1]. K. Tamizharasi and UmaRani (2014) "Work Stress and Job Performance Evaluation of BPO Employees," International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer and Communication Engineering Vol. 3, Issue 1, January 2014.
- [2]. Abdullah Aldarrab, Sandeep Jagani and TauseefIqbal (2006) – "Outsourcing to India: Current and Future Trends".
- [3]. MonishaVaid "Exploring the Lives of youth in BPO Sector," Health and Population Innovation Fellowship Program working paper, No. 10.
- [4]. Sharma, S. n.d. "Human issues in call centers and BPO industry—A report" <www.BPOindia.org> accessed on June 1, 2009.
- [5]. Sharma, S. 2004. "BPO industry in India—A Report"<www.BPOindia.org/research/bpo-in-india.html> accessed on 1 June, 2009.
- [6]. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and Population Council. 2005.Youth in India: Situation and Needs 2006–2007, Draft Questionnaires. Mumbai: IIPS (unpublished).
- [7]. Alexander, M., L. Garda, S. Kanade et al. 2006a. Formation of partnerships among young women and men in Pune district, Maharashtra. New Delhi: Population Council.
- [8]. Alexander, M., L. Garda, S. Kanade et al 2006b. Romance and sex: Pre-marital partnership formation among young women and men, Pune district, India," Reproductive Health Matters 14 (28): 144–55.
- [9]. Devesh Kumar Srivastava, Durg Singh Chauhan and Raghuraj Singh (2011)"Square Model- A Software Process Model for IVR software System" published in International Journal of Computer Applications (0975 – 8887) (Vol 13– No.7, Pg.33 - 36).
- [10]. Dhermendra Mehta, Jitendra K. Sharma & Naveen K. Mehta (April, 2011) in their article "An Empirical Study on Job Prospects in BPO: Indian Perspective" Published in UTMS Journal of Economics. (vol.2, no.2, pg. no. 29-35).
- [11]. Dr.V.Rama Devi and Dr.T.Anitha Devi (2010) in their article "KPO - The Future Cutting Edge For India" published in Osmania Journal of Management. (Vol.– 5, pg 1-8) .
- [12]. E. Mahmoodzadeh, Sh. Jalalinia, F. NekuiYazdi, (2009) "A business process outsourcing framework based on business process management and knowledge management", Business Process Management Journal, (Vol. 15, pg.845 – 864.).
- [13]. Easterlin and Crimmins (1991) studied the issues of personal self-fulfillment, family life, and public interest with reference to values of American youth. (Vol.– 5, pg 1-8).