



Factors Responsible for Stress among BPO Employees in Gurgaon

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to know about the level of stress and factors causing job stress in employees working BPOs. A sample of 180 respondents from 6 BPOs situated in Gurgaon district was taken on the basis of “Non-probability sampling” cum “Purposive sampling” cum “convenience sampling” method. A self administered and self structured questionnaire was used while collecting information. Simple percentage method has been used to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed that employees have moderate level of stress and insufficient holidays, traveling time, repetitive work, heavy workload, long working hours are the major reasons for increasing level of stress.

Key words: *Stress, BPOs, Employees*

I INTRODUCTION

Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury. The concept of Occupational stress is often confused with challenge, but these concepts are not the same. Challenge energizes us psychologically and physically, and it motivates us to learn new skills and master our occupations. When a challenge is met, we feel relaxed adolescents and satisfied.

Stress

The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences in 1936 by Hans Selye. But today, everyone seems to be talking about stress. You can hear it about, daily conversation but also through television, radio, the newspaper and ever-increasing number of conferences, stress centers and university courses devoted to this topic. “Stress” in general term applied to the pressure people feel in life. Stress is a consequence of or a general response to an action or situation that places special physical or psychological demands, or both, on a person. As such stress involves an interaction of the person and the environment. The physical and psychological demands from the environment that causes stress are called stressors. Stressors can take various forms, but all stressors have one thing common: they create stress at the potential for stress when an individual perceives them as representing a demand that may exceed that person’s ability to respond.

II STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES OF BPO'S

In the 21st century business environment stress has become a way of life an accepted occupational hazard. As results of external (resulting from deadlines, staffing issues, heavy work load and so on) an internal pressure (resulting from unconstructive thinking, unrealistic expectation, repetitive nature of work and so on) employee faces various symptoms stress that can harm their job performance. Stress is also led to physical psychological and behavioral problems. All over the worked, organization has continued to grapple with the questions concerning with the seriousness of the stress in the work place and involved in managing their employee's stress. Many strategies have been evolved to manage the stress in the organization. There are number of conditions that cause stress among employees. In the case of BPO, it becomes much more than other organization. The main cause of stress among employee working in BPO is as under :

Insufficient Holidays

Normally in comparison of the other sector like Government and semi-government, private sector gives less holiday to their employees and particularly when we are talking about BPO's, because of the focus on faster pace of work and time schedules of projects, too little holidays are enjoyed by employees.

Too Much and Too Little Work

All work schedules of BPO's depends upon project received for outsourcing a particular process or job. Sometimes employees have no work sometime excessive work. Mean there is no any uniformity in the work schedule of BPO. When there is excessive work load it led to stress among the employees.

Time Pressure

Time is precious than money. And business time is a critical factor. Each and every work should be completed at correct time. especially in BPO's each project has to complete at schedule time at any cost. Thus time pressure also led to stress.

Repetitive Nature of Work

Monotony at work is always a demotivator: no matter which industry one belongs to. Most BPO's in reality are call centers. The daily experiences therefore tend to be repetitive, intensive and stressful and this frequently results in employee burn out.

Long Working Hours

Call center executives work 10-12 hours, on an average everyday. While the normal working hours are 8 hours in government and other sectors. Long working hours also led to stress among employees.

Work Timings

Almost all BPO works 24x7, means 24 hours and all seven days of week. 24 hours are divided in day shifts and night shift. These are the changing shift and employee has to work n both shifts, sometimes in day shift and sometimes in night shifts.

Necessity to work fast

In BPO's there is always pressure on employees to work fast. Excess of anything goes to negative results. When too much fastness followed it also proves harmful to employees.

III CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

There are three types of problems arise due to stress among employees. There are as followings :

- Physical problem due to stress
- Psychological problem due to stress
- Behavioral problem due to stress

Physical Problem

Most of the attention and the basic research over the years has been devoted to impact stress has negative effect on physical health. According to the study of Herbert and Cohen (1994), there are several possible pathways through which stress could produce physical problems. 11 years has been passed when Herbert and Cohen studied it. Today the number stressors have increased greater extents.

When we talk particularly About BPO's along with excessive workload, night shifts and some other factors are also responsible to harm physical health, which are not alike in other sectors like.

- Totally work on computer terminal, and in case of call center: four parts of the body work simultaneously, those are eyes, ears, tongue and brain.
- Excessive time spend on setting posture; in front of computer.

In manufacturing industries and service sector (other than BPO), studies report (Zaleznik, Kets de Vries and Howard, 1977) said that manager showed a lower incidence of stress reaction than did staff and operational personnel. In case of BPO all are operational personnel. Some of the physical problems that might be possible due to working conditions of BPO's are as under :

Problems

Back Pain
Neck Pain
Weak Eye sight
Headache
Stomach Problem

Constant Tiredness
Dry mouth

Reasons

All working hours spent setting in one posture; that might be wrong
No any movement of neck
Working on computer screen for a long continuously
Too much mental work load
Less time for means. BPO employees Have wrong eating habits, they prefer fast food rather than a balance diet or they have not sufficient time to take their diet it creates stomach problem.
Busy schedule
Without break working hours

Psychological Problems

Psychological consequences of job stress relate to any individual's mental health and wellbeing. When people experience too much stress at work, they may find themselves sleeping too much or not enough. Stress may also lead to family problems and sexual difficulties. Other psychological symptoms of job stress are as under :

- Anxiety
- Lack of interest in life
- Depression
- Obsessional problems
- Anger
- Loss of sense of humour
- Feeling of neglect
- Irritability and so on

Behavioral Problems

Along with physical and psychological consequences, behavioural problems also resulted from stress. Behavioral consequences of stress are responses that may harm the person under stress or other. Direct behaviors that may accompany high levels of stress include :

- Under eating or over eating
- Increase smoking and drinking
- Drug abuse
- Accident
- Violence
- Proneness
- Appetite disorders

IV STRESS AND PERFORMANCE

Historically, it was assumed that low stress led to high job performance and high job stress led to low job performance. But later research indicated that it was an incorrect assumption. Stressed worker/employee/manager may give high job performance or low job performance or only an average job performance. So stress and job performance relationship is quite complex, being influenced by many intervening variables. Some correlations have been found between job stress and job performance; but these are often small and not statistically significant. Further, there is a question whether job stress led to poor job performance or poor job performance led to stress.

Stress either can be helpful or harmful to job performance, depending upon the amount of it. Graph presents a stress performance.

- When there is no stress job challenges are absent and performance tends to be low.

- As stress increases, performance tends to increase because stress helps a person call up resources to meet the job requirements.
- As stress reach to a plateau that corresponds approximately with a persons top day to day performance capacity. At this point additional stress doesn't produce more improvements and finally, it stress becomes too great, performance begin to decline. In the very high stress, employees can strike or fall ill.

Thus we can generalize that job performance tends to be the best under moderate amount of stress. Too much stress cause people to becomes temporarily ineffective and too little stress cause people to become lethargic and in attentive. The optimum amount if stress is referred to as eustress-a positive force in our lives that is equivalent of finding excitement and challenges in life.

V REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhatti et al. (2010) identified that the middle level executives seemed to be under more stress at the moment in comparison to others and won't mind making a job switch to even a lesser known brand if offered a lucrative deal. Chatterjee et al (2011) observed that job stress is high in the BPO sector and the main source is the over-load as it involves tight target deadlines. The employer here are young and lack of skill development strategies and stress handling abilities thus the female employers are taking resource to emotion-focused coping which is worsening the well-being. Cognitive concern towards future is significant due to the insecurity thus produced, irregular working hours, pressures of shift work, lack of sleep, irritate customer and lack of motivating factors are some main factors for female suffer from role-expectation conflict. Sumathi et al (2013) observed that task strategies was preferred the most as a coping mechanism to manage their stress. it is meant that the respondents are reorganize their tasks and organizational process which they are involved to cope up with stress and the least respondents use logic as a coping strategy and the researcher found that employees above the age of 25 years are more certain and stronger than lesser age category .employees with higher age use more than others. Kotteswaqri and Sharief (2014) revealed that both the male and female employees are experiencing stress in their work place. Irrespective of the age majority of the employees agree that the job stress is affecting their job performance. Ezhilarasi (2015) In the present study the researcher found that the employees adopted various coping strategies to cope up with stress in their workplace Employees tend to cope by using submissive coping, functional coping, diversion coping, relaxation coping, third-party support coping, cognitive Restructuring coping and transitory reinforcement coping. 28% of the employee belongs to the age group of 20-25 years, 74% of the employees are male, 24% of the employees are never used the day dream, 28% of the employees are mostly used the complain, 30% of the employees are never used the smoke/drink alcohol, 30% of the employees are sometimes used to write stress dairy. Kumar (2016) revealed that occupational stress among BPO Workers the study says that BPO Workers person they have moderate occupational stress, there is no significant difference in occupational stress among male and female BPO Workers.

VI SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study helps to know about the level of stress and factors causing job stress. This study has made an attempt to bring out the modern coping strategies followed by the employee and the employers to overcome their stress and to improve their performance.

VII OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of stress in employees of BPOs
2. To study the causes of stress in employees of BPOs

METHOD

For the purpose of present study “non-probability sampling” cum “Purposive sampling” cum “convenience sampling” method has been used, which involves personal judgment. Sample size must be sufficiently large so that we can have a representative sample with the same principal we also have to consider the key factor i.e. time and money that are available with the researcher. Keeping in view the above guidelines, sample size was decided at 180 respondents. The present study was conducted by the researcher in Gurgaon city. The respondents are selected from 6 BPO’s.

TOOL USED

For the purpose of present study self administered and self structured questionnaire was used while collecting information, most of the questions were in the form of multiple choice.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

Simple percentage method has been used to analyze the data.

DATA ANALYSIS

The first objective of the study to know the level of stress among employees of BPOs is given in Table 1:

Table 1: Level of Stress

Level of Stress	% of respondents
Very high	12.21
Moderate	62.60
Low	25.19

The table shows that out of total employees, 12.21% are found highly stressed, while 62.6% employees have moderate level of stress and 25.19% has employees have low level of stress.

The second objective of the study to know the factors responsible for stress among employees of BPOs is given in Table 2:

Table 2 : Factors responsible for stress

Key factors for stress	% of Respondents
Insufficient Holidays	32.06
Travel Time	30.53
Repetitive Work	28.24
Heavy Work Load	25.95

Long Working Hours	22.24
Lack of Cultural Activities	19.85
Night Shift	15.27
Others	2.29

The table 2 shows about the factors responsible for stress level in BPO’s employees. It shows that 32.06 per cent employees suffering from stress due to insufficient holidays, while 30.53 per cent employees said that they have to travel a lot resulting level of stress, 28.24 per cent employees suffered from stress due to repetitive work, 25.95 per cent employees said that heavy work load resulting level of stress in them, 22.24 per cent employees said that long working hours responsible for stress, 19.85 per cent employees said lack of cultural activities responsible of increasing level of stress, 15.27 per cent employees stressed due to night shift and few (2.29 per cent) employees told other reasons for stress.

VIII FINDINGS

1. It was found majority of the employees have moderate level of stress.
2. It was found that insufficient holidays, traveling time, repetitive work, heavy workload, long working hours are the major reasons for increasing level of stress.

IX CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The call center provides lot of job opportunities. But the employees are not clear about their personal growth and development. The organizations should identify the sources of stress for their employees. Job feedback, workload and promotion opportunities are the major stressors for the call center executives. Working conditions, job security, workplace politics, job satisfaction, changes taking place in the work place and interpersonal relations create medium stress among them. In giving job feedback, good performance and achievements are to be appreciated. They must be brought to the notice of others. Feedbacks of poor performance and inadequacies are to be dealt personally and the executives must be helped to overcome them. The stress due to heavy workload, long hours of duty, traveling time and poor working conditions can be reduced by improving the working conditions. Providing good canteen facility or cafeteria where employees can go for a break and refresh and giving them enough leisure time and holidays can really help. Taking the employees for a holiday outing can improve the interpersonal relations and reduce their stress level. The responsibility of the call centers is to provide a clear career path to its employees so that the stress due to job security and promotion opportunity can be eliminated. Open door policy and speedy solution to employee issues can improve job satisfaction and reduce workplace politics. The organizations should also show care and concern for the employee. The employees should be properly trained on stress management and behavioral aspects. Above all teaching them about our culture, tradition and imparting value education at the school and college level will help in incorporating high values among the individuals and help them in the long run. Proper counseling by experienced counselors, social outings and stress management programmes including yoga and meditation can help to maintain a stress free work environment in call centers.

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