
A Study on Extent of Impact Shown by Several Consequences of Stressors on Turnover Intentions Among Call Center Employees

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Abstract

Stress is an individual's general feeling of unease or upset in response to a traumatic event in life and the accumulation of other concomitant problems or change. Stress causes an individual to deviate from his normal functioning. It leads to various types of consequences in his/her life. For the organization it will become a burden in the form of dissatisfaction among employees, absenteeism, sick leaves and no loyalty towards the organization. The present paper is all about the various consequences of occupational stress among the call center employees and its impact upon the turnover intentions among the employees.

Keywords: Stress, turnover intentions, call center, employees, behaviour

1. Introduction

Occupational stress is a term which has become a buzz word these days. Irrespective of people working for various organizations in various cadres everyone is suffering with stress. According to Beehr and Newman (1978)¹ define occupational stress as "A condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning." The consequences of stress are manifold in nature, it will have an adverse impact on physiology, individual psychology, there will be behavioral changes etc. if the problem of occupational stress is not addressed properly it will lead to dissatisfaction of an employee in his/her job and as a result employee turnover takes place in the organization.

2. Literature review

Occupational stress and its relationship to physical and mental illness have been of great interest in research. Doloresksong (1999)² stated that job stress leads to heart disease and other health problems like gastrointestinal illness, depression, immune system dysfunction back and joint pain, and absenteeism. Kivimaki (2002)³ found that high job strain increases the risk of cardiovascular mortality. In a study conducted by Pickering (1996)⁴ found that job strain is a risk factor for hypertension in men but not in women. Srivastava and Singh (2002)⁵ examined the relationship of job and life stress to health outcomes among male managers and observed that job stress was significantly positively related to psychosomatic health complaints and pathogenic health habits. Chaudhuri (1977)⁶ conducted a study on patients who complained of amenorrhea and found that psychic

stress like over work, anxiety, occupational confinement were prime responsible for such a disorder.

French and Caplan (1973)⁷ suggest that the behavioral consequences or role overload include job dissatisfaction and increased job tension. Bheer, Walsh and Taber (1976)⁸ found that role overload was positively correlated with organizationally valued outcomes and also with adverse individual outcomes such as tension, job dissatisfaction, fatigue etc. (Drabek and Haas, (1969)⁹ Andrews and Farris, (1972)¹⁰ Poor performance on job is another consequence related to job related stress. French and Caplan (1973)⁷ found that objective quantitative overload was strongly related to cigarette smoking. Persons with more phone calls, office visits and meetings per given unit of work time were found to smoke significantly more cigarettes than persons with fewer such engagements. Ahuja, (2002)¹¹ studied job stress in agents. The high stress group had higher caffeine and poor dietary intakes. Bray et al. (1999)¹² examined relationship between perceived stress and substance use (cigarette smoking, heavy drinking, and drug use) and found positive relationship. Lyons (1971)¹³ has shown that perceived role ambiguity among registered noises is related to voluntary turnover. Absenteeism and turnover have negative organizational consequences.

Attrition among call center agents

Labor turnover is an important problem faced by the management of call center organizations today, Taylor and Bain, (1999)¹⁴. The reasons for this are the pressures of job, lack of promotion opportunities, working time, work-life balance, repetitive nature of work and the 'phone-rage'(Deery and Kinnie, (2004)¹⁵, Houlihan, (2004)¹⁶. Most top agents acknowledge that a turnover of staff is an inevitable aspect of the industry. The reasons attributed for this is boredom with the job, seeking better prospects or a change, no better monetary

benefits lack of career opportunities, failure of the call center to effectively train employees to stay at the job. Most employees leave the job within 2 years because of repetitive nature of the job. It is observed by the industry experts that ambitious youngsters, out to make a fast buck, jump across BPO companies, making staff turnover the largest issue before business leaders and boardrooms. Sanjeev Sharma (2007)¹⁷, in his study on Human issues in call centers and BPO industry- a report found that absenteeism is very high in call centers. Employees tend to be very irregular to the duty due to various reasons related to work and health issues.

According to the Dataquest survey (2004)¹⁸ results, the call center ranked high for attrition due to health reasons, for sleeping disorders 83% compared to industry average of 39.5%, voice loss 8.5% compared to industry average of 39.5%, other problems were ear problems (8.5%), digestive disorders (14.9%) and eye problems (10.6%).

3. Statement of the Problem and Methodology

Occupational stress causes different types of problems to the employees at all levels. After globalization the competition among various firms with the industry had increased and as a result employee stress had increased considerably (to reduced cost and increase sales). As we have seen in the literature that stress have an adverse impact up on the employee health and family. It kills the individual from inside. No individual in this world is exceptional to stress. It should be optimal and should not increase to uncontrollable limit. Present day call center organization employees are undergoing a lot of stress in the form of role overload, role ambiguity, intrinsic improvement and unprofitability (Dr.M.V.S.Sudhakar, 2012)¹⁹. This results in the form of symptoms like physiological, cognitive, emotional and behavioral. Optimal stress level in the job and effective stress management techniques will relieve the employee from these problem else they

will look for other opportunities and thus increase the employee turnover in the organization.

Employee turnover in the organization will have adverse impacts to the organization in the form of increase in cost of recruitment & selection, training and loss in the work days etc. the present study will throw a light up on the consequences of stress among the employees working for outbound international call centers in Hyderabad and the turnover intentions among them as a result of the consequences. A total of 633 employees working for seven different outbound international call centers located in Hyderabad were considered on simple random sampling technique basis. For studying the consequences because of stress, an instrument developed by Vera Peiffer, used to measure the symptoms (physiological, cognitive, emotional and behavioral) over the past six months was used. The more the score of the instrument higher the symptoms. To calculate the employee turnover intentions three questions relating to turnover intentions were asked. Data for these questions were collected on a five-point scale. The personal data sheet is used to obtain information concerned with particulars of Name of the Employee, organization, Designation, sex, age, Number of years of experience in call center industry, and present organization etc. To find out the relationship between consequences of stress and

turnover intentions multiple regression is calculated among predictors and dependent variables.

4. Regression equation of Consequences of stress and turnover intentions

Table No.1 provides the summary of the multiple regression model which tells the relationship between consequences of stress and turnover intentions. The value of R from the table is 0.624, which tells that there is a positive correlation between the consequence of stress and turnover intentions. The higher the consequences among call center employees the higher will be the turnover intentions and vice versa. The value of the R² tells the variability of the outcome i.e., turnover intentions accounted by the predictors (consequences of stress). For the model the value is 0.389 which means that predictors can account for 38.9% variation. The adjusted R² value gives an idea of how well the model generalizes the difference (0.389-0.371) .018 or 1.8%.

Table No.1 Table showing significant relationship between Consequences of stress and Turnover intentions among Call center employees.

Model	R	RSquare	Adjusted R Square	F	p-value
1	.624	.389	.380	52.213	.000**

a. Predictors: (Constant), Behavioural Responses, Cognitive Responses, Physiological Symptoms, Emotional Responses

b. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intentions

Table No.2 Table showing Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficient values for Consequences of Stress and Turnover intentions among Call center employees.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 Constant	1.002	.165		6.085	.000**
Physiological Symptoms	.354	.403	.324	8.90	.000**
Cognitive Responses	.284	.250	.328	11.557	.000**
Emotional Responses	.472	.357	.448	13.499	.000**
Behavioural Responses	.015	.015	.039	.964	.336

From the table no.1 it can be understood that the F-value 52.213 is significant at 1% level of significance. Therefore it can be concluded that the multiple regression model results in significant better prediction of the reasons for turnover intentions because of consequences of stress. Table No.2 provides details of the model parameters (the beta values) and the significance of these values. Equation - I shows that b0 was the Y intercept and this value is the value B for the constant. So, from the table, b0 is 1.002 and this can be interpreted as when there is no predictors (when X=0) the model predicts that there will be 1.002. The value of b1 (Physiological symptoms) from the table is 0.354. Which tells that if the Physiological symptoms are increased by 0.354 then the turnover intentions of employees will increase by 1. Similarly, b values of cognitive responses, Emotional responses and Behavioral responses are 0.284, 0.472, and 0.015 respectively. The regression equation for the dependent variable (turnover intentions) and independent variables (consequences of stress) is given below.

$$Y = 1.002 + 0.354 X_1 + 0.284 X_2 + 0.472 X_3$$

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Y = Turnover intentions

Variables X1, X2 and X3 are Physiological symptoms, Cognitive responses and Emotional responses.

Among all the consequences of stress which cause turnover intentions, Emotional responses, cognitive responses and physiological symptoms contribute high sequentially. From the above we can conclude that the turnover intentions among the call center employees working for international call centers in Hyderabad, is because of various consequences of stress like Emotional responses, cognitive responses and physiological symptoms.

5. Conclusion

Every business organization objective will be to

cut cost, improve profit margin. This can only be achieved through the employees working for the organization. In order to see that efficient employees work and take the organization to a new height, it should had strong polices and good working conditions which make the employees feel conformable in their jobs and their by the organization can reduce the employee job stress and in turn turnover intentions.

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