



# Assessing the impact of Work Life Balance Practices on Employee Retention in the BPO Sector: A study of service provider employees

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the impact of variables (Organizational health, Occupational stress and social support) on work performance of employees regarding work and life balance. A total of 250 interviews were taken from managers of different BPO organizations in NCR region in India. Descriptive Analysis is indicating that these variables have significant and positive impact on employee Work performance. Very less research has been done about employee work and life balance in Business Process Out sourcing (BPO) sector. The findings regarding the factors of work and life balance of the employees can be useful to the planners and marketers of Business Process Outsourcing sector in formulating strategies to maintain or enhance their competitiveness.

**Keywords:** *Work Life Balance, Organizational Health, Occupational Stress, Social Support, Employee Performance, BPO Industry, Job Satisfaction, Workplace Stress, Human Resource Management, Employee Wellbeing.*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The work of Taylor and Fayol had, of course undeniable economic advantage; however, the economic advantages have been considerably offset by increasing human problems, including boredom, underutilization of intellectual skills, alienation, absenteeism and turnover. In reaction of the obvious problems caused by simple repetitive jobs imposed by the concept of Scientific management, the human relation school centered in US attempted to draw upon the knowledge acquired through society and psychology and

apply it to day-to-day industrial life. Much of these works were directed towards refining the scientific management technique, by applying the new insights to evolving "socio-technical" system-not in the interest of workers, but to optimize the manipulative capacity of scientific management in the interest of higher productivity and profit.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Work-life balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) on one hand and "life"

(Health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Related, though broader, terms include "lifestyle balance" and "life balance". It Represents a blending of concerns for human values of today's society with an awareness that all the individuals devote the greater parts of their mature lives to work, expending time, energy and physical and mental resources to the endeavor. Work-life balance "is the stability characterized by the balancing of an individual's life complexity and dynamism with environmental and personal resources such as family, community, employer, profession, geography, information, economics, personality, or values". Work-life balance is different for every individual in different stages of life. An individual who is fresh out from college and single would have a different notion of work-life balance compared with an individual who may be single but have certain 'obligations' to his/her family and again different for a married individual with kids, more so for single parents. The employees' age, lifestyle, and environment play important role in one's perception of work-life balance. The conflict between work and family spheres is also considered especially when there is role conflict and strain added to this is the productivity requirements in the workplace that often interferes with family responsibilities of individuals employed in sectors relying heavily on shift work.

### 3. BPO WORK ENVIRONMENT AND ORGANIZATION

India is currently the most popular offshoring destination on parameters such as macroeconomic stability, regulations, labour cost and skills and is likely to gain more as the scale of outsourcing in the financial service sector. The basic requirements in creating a great Business Process Outsourcing company has to handle customer confidentiality safeguarding the customer availability to customer (24x7), customer security and people security, but generally these are only be provided to the clients, if the company efficiently manages the employee providing the varying services the great change can be seen in the Business Process Outsourcing industry. General organizational and work environment in BPOs is largely different from traditional organizations as "the customer-oriented nature of work often challenges the

traditional conceptions of control and coordination". It is fast-paced with a 24/7 operations leading to "possibilities for novel modes of conceptualizing and organizing work, leading to discernible changes in work cultures".

The employer, naturally, wants to ensure staff availability at right times to meet customer demand, while the employee wants the freedom to pursue outside interests, and to schedule work around these activities. In the Business Process Outsourcing Industry, in which working mothers are the largest employee group, nearly seven out of ten agents prefer to work flexible hours. GMT has produced a white paper on this tricky balancing act for employee and employer, outlining the major benefits of call center workforce management.

- **Save on recruitment costs:** Just as it is more expensive to win over new customers than to retain existing ones, it is good business to retain the people you have invested time, money and training in. Recruitment is expensive, and research shows that staff turnover is significantly lower in those organizations that have four or more work-life balance initiatives or flexible working practices.
  - **Reduce absenteeism:** In a recent survey, a public sector organization established that more than 50 percent of its staff admitted to using sick leave as a means of managing family commitments, resulting in an overall attendance rate of 87 percent. When improved flexible working options were introduced, attendance rose to over 96 percent.
  - **Motivate staff:** Employees who can designate the times they would like to work, their less-preferred times, times when they are not available, and so on, are likely to be more productive, have higher attendance rates and less likely to seek a new job.
  - **Improve customer service:** More productive, happier employees also mean better customer service. Having the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time improves operational efficiency and performance.
- Helping your employees maintain work/life balance isn't something you do just for them — it can be vital to the health of your company.

Employee burnout has a major impact on productivity, but that's not its only negative effect.

- Overworked and overstressed employees are more likely to get sick and have high absentee rates.
- A lack of work/life balance affects an employee's attitude. Unhappy workers are typically less efficient and can destroy morale.
- Burnout directly affects turnover rates. Employees can work at a frantic pace for only so long before they get frustrated and leave a company.

Employee burnout is caused by a number of things, including an employee's own abilities, their workload, their responsibilities and how much support they have in the workplace. But there are things you can do help employees juggle work and home life. Even the smallest efforts show your employees that you respect their personal time and make them feel good about their relationship with you and the company.

#### 4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The delineation of objectives helps in forming the correct design and in performing the research as per the requirement of the study.

- To understand the relationship between quality of work life and work performance of employees working under the service provider company of the BPO sector.
- In case of significant relationships, to suggest means of improving the work performance through quality work life.

#### 5. THE SURVEY: A BACKGROUND

The questionnaire which is used as a survey instrument consisted of two sections. The first part of the questionnaire gathered demographic information of employees. The second part consists of item that utilize of a 5-point Likert type scale. In the Likert scale the respondent were asked to respond to each of the statements in terms of five degrees of agreements and disagreement. For the collection of data questionnaire, Information were collected through field survey conducted. Respondents were met simultaneously at the 3 centers namely Delhi, Noida and Gurgaon between June to Aug 2024. The salient points regarding the methodology include:

- 70 percent of 350 interviews were conducted face-to-face by random selection.
- Other modes included telephonic contact and form distribution through known references with the help of e-mail.
- Respondents were met at office canteens, taxi stops, residences/hostels through contacts and door-stopping techniques.

A survey was conducted among 25 short listed registered Business Process Outsourcing companies from NCR (National Capital Region) including Delhi, Noida, and Gurgaon in each city, a sample quota was assigned based on the company's employee strength in that city. Business Process Outsourcing companies were selected on the basis of Stratified Proportionate Random sampling. Stratified Proportionate Random Sampling method is the method where the population is divided into different strata or groups on the basis of proportion and then samples are selected from each stratum by simple random sampling procedure or by regular interval method.

The software approach for the data analysis in this research was SPSS 24 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 24). 0.05 was accepted as the level of significance in the statistical computations. The instrument used to assess the work performance of employees was designed. It consisted of 3 clustered with 30 items. The clusters thus formed and the associated dimensions with Organizational health, Occupational stress and social support.

#### 6. RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section focuses on analyzing responses to the questions addressed in the questionnaires used for the employees of Business Process Outsourcing company. The questionnaire that was designed to investigate the perception of employees towards their work and life balance consisted of 30 questions.

Exhibit 1.1 illustrates the responses of the study population (measured by Mean and Standard Deviation) on questions (1-30) of the research questionnaire.

**Exhibit 1.1:** Perceptions of respondents towards their work and life balance

<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The policies and goals of the organization are based on well thought out plan of action so that the personal social and cultural needs of each member are adequately.	250	3.84	.874
This organization has made a fine arrangement for imparting necessary information to every employee	250	4.20	1.347
There is no unnecessary waste of time because of faultless communication arrangement.	250	2.60	1.417
There is built in mechanism to carry on normal routine task.	250	3.40	1.138
Every member of this organization is well aware of his position, powers and responsibilities.	250	2.98	1.077
There is no power centralization in this organization but powers and responsibilities are assigned to the deserving persons.	250	3.85	1.249
The employees of this organization do not feel fatigue or boredom due to sound co-ordination system.	250	2.24	.925
Every member tries to continue with this organization.	250	3.48	1.179
The employees working with this organization never feel inconsistency between what they are and what they should be.	250	3.38	1.129
I have to do a lot of work in this job	250	3.42	1.260
I feel that my job responsibilities hardly leave adequate time to focus on my career goals.	250	3.83	1.339
I feel that the organization has given me role and responsibility which is not in line with my career aspiration.	250	3.42	1.287
My assignments are of monotonous nature.	250	3.44	1.267
Owing to excessive work load I have to manage with insufficient number of employees and resources.	250	3.98	1.412
I feel that incentives are directly linked with good performance in the organization.	250	3.98	1.112
I feel that proper Job enlargement and job enrichment are available in the organization for the employees.	250	2.52	1.443
I feel that the behaviors of co-workers are co-operative and suppurative.	250	3.86	1.070
I feel that I am satisfied with my overall job security.	250	3.13	1.245
My opinion is sought in changing or modifying the working system, instruments and conditions.	250	3.52	1.061
I am unable to carry out my assignments to my satisfaction on account excessive load of work and lack of time.	250	4.18	1.328
I feel that I am not giving enough time to my family responsibility as my current job takes away too much of my time.	250	3.32	1.432
I feel that working at odd time in the office has created resentment and discontentment in my family.	250	3.78	1.169
I feel that due to my job and odd working hours has generated lot of stress in my family relationship.	250	3.91	1.072
I feel that the compensation given by the company matches with my family responsibilities.	250	3.92	1.123
There is no one I knew who will tell me honestly how I am handling my problems.	250	3.20	1.185
I feel that my irregular sleeping hours has generated lack of concentration insomnia and other health related problems.	250	4.09	.869

There is no one I trust to give me good advice about money matters.	250	4.04	.983
I feel that my eating habits have gone out due to my job.	250	4.20	.930
I am usually invited to do things with others.	250	4.43	.985
I often feel I left out by my circle of friends.	250	2.43	.897

The result of the descriptive statistics was run to ascertain their mean values and Standard Deviation, and the result revealed the important factors that contribute to work –life balance. Exhibit 1.1 above shows that the vast majority of the respondents explicitly and strongly asserted that incentives of the company are directly link with their good performance in the organization (mean 3.98, S.D 1.112). Further the respondents stated that behaviors of their co-workers are cooperative and supportive (mean 3.86, SD 1.070). The respondent also stated that they work with team spirit in the company (mean 3.52, SD 1.061).

On the negative side the respondent complained that they lack enough time for family responsibilities as their current job takes too much of time (mean 4.18, SD 0.928). Further the respondent also complained that their eating habits has become disbalanced due to their hectic job schedule (mean 4.20 SD 0.930). The vast majority of respondents stated that their irregular sleeping hours has generated lot of stress in their family relationship. (mean 3.91 SD 1.072).

Good work environment, high growth opportunity and salary remain the top three parameters for a job. Business Process Outsourcing has also emerged as a viable career option that has gone beyond compensation with more and more employees looking at a healthy work environment and growth opportunities at the workplace. The employees of the Business Process Outsourcing company stated that they are not involved in decision making, which is directly or indirectly affect their job. On the positive side, most of the respondent asserted that the behavior of their co-workers was co-operative and supportive, hence it can be seen that the environment of Business Process Outsourcing Company is friendly and cheerful. At the time of survey team sprit was also found to exist in the organization.

The result of the study revealed that the employees working in Business Process Outsourcing employees are not satisfied with their supervisors. The result of the study revealed that there are no proper job enlargement and job

enrichment opportunities are available in the organization for the employees. Employees stated that there is no such type of challenge or interest to the job performer and there are no opportunities for achievement, recognition, advancement and growth. The respondents also stated that they well performing the work, in which they were not interested. They were of the view that if there was change in the job pattern in some extent, they will become more satisfied.

Family responsibilities affect the performance of employees, and its explanatory power relative to that of other potential predictors can not be ascertained. Family responsibilities are more difficult to measure and which when combined with work, shift the balance. Regarding the fulfillment of the family responsibilities of the respondent, the result of the study showed that employees were not satisfied with it. A number of the respondent stated that due to long working hours, they were not able to give enough time to their families. The employees stated that due to odd working hours especially late night and early morning shifts have hampered their family relationship. Regarding the health of the Business Process Outsourcing employees, the study reveled that most of respondent were face the health problems like lack of concentration and insomnia due to high stress. The study showed digestive disorder was common phenomenon among employees in the Business Process Outsourcing sector. Long hours of work, permanent night shifts, incredibly high work target, loss of identity are the dark clouds that threaten to mar the 'sunshine' Business Process Outsourcing in . Stress is like a ghost that continues to haunt the Business Process Outsourcing industry. Long work hours, night shifts, long travel hour's repetitive nature of work and absence of adequate holidays continue to cripple employees.

The findings regarding the factors of work and life balance of the employees can be useful to the planners and marketers of Business Process Outsourcing sector in formulating strategies to maintain or enhance their competitiveness. In other words, they should focus more on



maintaining or improving factors that contribute to maintain work and life balance of employees.

- In order to remove the misunderstanding among the employees of the Business Process Outsourcing sector, regular meetings, conferences should be conducted with fixed agenda, so that the employees may have a sense of belongingness with the organization.
- Managers can also help employees learn why policies are important and identify employees' perceptions of current policies through discussion, meetings, and interviews.
- To bring about more belongingness and ownership in the organization, it is suggested that workers participation in management should be made at the middle and top level of management.
- There is a need for counseling sessions to tackle the stress among the employees arising from odd working hours.
- Economic and social pressures are also challenging as they expect social reorganization with good earnings.

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