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EFFECTIVENESS OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION TECHNIQUES ADOPTED BY BPO COMPANIES WITH REFERENCE TO CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

Employee retention is a process in which the employees are encouraged to remain with the organization for the maximum period of time or until the completion of the project. The present study examines the phenomenon of Employee Retention in the BPO sector in Chennai in order to develop appropriate strategies, which can help the organizations in this sector to retain their valuable talent. The major objectives of the research are to study: employee retention strategies followed in the BPO industry, significance of HR practices in the attainment of job satisfaction amongst the employees of the industry; extent of employee attrition prevalent; significance of individual, organizational and industry related factors in determining employee retention and identify different strategies adopted to reduce the monotony of work for the executive positions. The area of study is confined to employees of BPO Companies in Chennai. The questionnaire is framed for the research study is structured questionnaire. The form of question is of both closed and open type. The chi square test, correlation test and Anova are used for evaluation of the data.

KEYWORDS

Retention, Employee turnover or Attrition rate, Outsourcing, Retention techniques.

INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE STUDY

Effective employee retention is a systematic effort by employers to create and foster an environment that encourages current employees to remain employed, by having policies and practices in place that address their diverse needs. A strong retention strategy, therefore, becomes a powerful recruitment tool.

In India, there are few sectors where the attrition level is much larger compared to other sectors, for example, IT sector and BPO; whereas, there are organizations like Air India, HAL, DRDO, BARC where the attrition is much lower – nearly 5% or less than that. To keep employees and keep their satisfaction levels high, any organization needs to implement each of the three R's of employee retention: respect, recognition, and rewards.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

RETENTION

Retention is defined by Get Les Mckeown's, Personnel Management, Edition-2, Page No.205, employee retention is a systematic effort by employers to create and foster an environment that encourages current employees to remain employed by having policies and practices in place that addresses their drivers needs. According to Zineldin 2000, p. 28 in an article Customer satisfaction and retention: the experiences of individual employees, "A commitment to continue to do business or exchange with a particular company on an ongoing basis". According to John W.Newstorm, Organizational Behaviour, Edition-11, Page No.305, employee retention refers to the efforts by which attempt of employers is to decrease employee turnovers, training costs, and loss of talent. By implementing lessons learned from key organizational behavior concepts employers can improve retention rates and decrease the associated costs of high turnover. Strategic Human Resources Management by Armstrong and Angel Baron Jaico Book House, 2nd Edition 2008Page Number-256, says that, Employee Retention involves taking measures to encourage employees to remain in the organization for the maximum period of time. According to Dr. Harry Bond, Training and Development, Edition – 2, Page No. 53 explains that, Employee retention refers to various policies and practices which let the employees to stick to an organization for a longer period of time.

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER OR ATTRITION RATE

Human Resources Management by H.John Bernardin,Tata McGraw-Hil Company 4th Edition 2009,Page Number-274, says that, Employee turnover affects the whole organization in terms of productivity. Managing the turnover, hence, becomes an important task.Human Resources Management Practice by Michael Armstrong Kogan Page Private Company 10th 2009Page Number-196, says that, When asked about why employees leave, low salary comes out to be a common excuse. Borkowski, N.(2005) Organizational behavior in healthcare. Jones and Bart let publishers says that the organization must first understand what types of things will motivate their staff because what works for one individual may not be a reward that is desirable to another individual. A lack of proper training on the new skills necessary for direct care staff has increased the stress that employees feel and has lead to increased turnover and low morale among workers (Larson and Hewitt, 2005). NYSACRA (2009) Direct support professionals voices from the frontlines, Albany, N.Y. says that Additionally, 62% of individuals stated the conduct of other workers, high turnover, and lack of support and recognition, all contributed to an extremely stressful job and providing services to clients served even more difficult. Wal-Mart (1999). Low employee turnover conducted research on new hire attitudes in 1999, aiming to reduce employee turnover by 50%. The critical link between orientation and employee turnover was highlighted in this research. Marx, Mary (1995, December). Keeping your best employees. Journal of Property Management, 26-29 says that, "the better the match between recruits and the organization the more likely you are to retain them."

BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING (BPO)

The article "Outsourcing: Paving Way for Global Competitiveness" by N M Shanthi and E Naveen Kumar, Icfai Press portrays the process of evolution of the BPO concept and its transformation into KPO in recent times. David Landes in his book, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (1998, Norton) traces the origin of outsourcing to 13th century Europe The book titled Multisourcing - Concepts and Applications written by Jaya Krishna S published by icfai press, 2007aims to sensitize the respective professionals/community with the concept and value of 'multi-sourcing,' The book Business Process Outsourcing - Growth and Country Experiences by Rajmanohar T P Sivarajadhanavel traces the evolution and growth of the outsourcing industry from manufacturing to service. It delves into the practice of outsourcing related to manufacturing, BPO, and KPO business process transformation. S. Nakkiran and D. John Franklin in his edited book named Business Process Outsourcing: Concept, Current Trends, Management and Future Challenges Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 2004 covers the areas relating to concept, current trends, management and future challenges

RETENTION TECHNIQUES

The article, "Retention Strategies in ITES-BPO Industry" written by Sanjeev Sharma. The article gives the reasons for the high attrition rates for BPO employees such as no growth opportunity/lack of promotion, better salary expectations, and pursuit of higher education, wrong guidance by the company, lack of personal life, physical strain and uneasy relationship with peers or managers. Col. PSV Ramana in his article, Motivational Strategies for Attracting and Retaining the Talent Indian Armed Forces Page No. 16 says that, motivational strategies to attract talent by way of providing an exciting service life and lucrative post-separation rehabilitation, as well as, 'Motivation and Morale'-related best practices while in service. Anandan pillai in his article, Motivation as Key Retention Strategy in Hospitality Industry Page No. 26 explains that, Employee motivational programs need not be always monetary-based, many times non-monetary based programs too yield substantial results. Human Resources Management by Wayne Cascio, Tata Mc Graw-HillCompany 7th Edition 2008,Page Number-245,

says that, Before joining the organization, tell the candidate what is expected from him. According to Jayanthi Kishore, Human Resource Management, Edition-2, Page NO. 49, says that, Employee retention is the effort by employers to encourage current employees to remain employed with the organization programs such as learning and development, rewards and recognition, succession planning and providing policies and practices that address their needs are examples of ways of retaining employees.

NEED OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to determine employee's retention in the BPO companies at Chennai. The study designed to explore the main retention factors and strategies for BPO sector employees. The project attempts to deepen our understanding about factors influencing employee's satisfaction and strategies to retain the talented workforce in the organization.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The company is adopting various retention techniques to retain their employees. They wanted to analyze which technique can be adopted for retaining their employees more effectively. Hence they allowed me to undertake the project work in their organization.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the various retention techniques that exist in the organisations
2. To document the nature of employee turnover in the BPO Companies.
3. To study the impact of employee retention techniques on the reduction of employee turnover.
4. To suggest the plants in the development of a focused employee retention strategies.

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses are used in this research.

H1: There is a significant difference between the Income and Workload in Organization.

H2: There is a significant difference between the age and Relationship with Superiors in Organization.

H3: there is no significant difference between Designation and the Organization treating their employees in a respectful manner.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study is descriptive in nature. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs, as it exists at present. The instrument used for the study is questionnaire. Questionnaire is widely used and important method to collect primary data for any research program. Each questionnaire was given to an individual and humbly requested to fill it in my present. Both the primary and secondary data has been collected. The primary data was collected through questionnaire by surveying the mentioned sample unit. The secondary source consists of readily available files and documents on BPO Companies in Chennai. Secondary data is also collected through books, periodicals, magazines, NASSCOM Reports and websites. The sample size is taken as 200 employees of BPO Companies in Chennai only. Sampling techniques used was Simple Random sampling for selecting the 20 Companies from the list through lottery method. Convenience sampling is been used for selecting the 200 employees of BPO from all 20 companies. The statistical tools used for the analysis are as percentage analysis, correlation, chi-square analysis and ANOVA.

FINDINGS ON DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Out of the 200 respondents, 58 % of the respondents are between the age 25-35 and only 2% of the respondents are between 45-55 years. It is clear that majority of the respondents (74.5%) are male candidates. It shows that 50% of the respondents are post-graduate and 49% of the respondents are graduates. The table shows that 54.5% of the respondents are Unmarried and 45.5% of the respondents are married. 30.5% of the respondents are having the income between 15,000-25000 and only 20.5% of the respondents get below 15,000 income.

The chart depicts the findings of demographic variables as below.

Sl.No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 25	57	28.5
	25 – 35	116	58
	35 – 45	22	11
	45 – 55	5	2.5
Gender	Male	149	74.5
	Female	51	25.5
Qualification	Graduate	98	49
	Post Graduate	102	51
Marital status	Married	91	45.5
	Unmarried	109	54.5
Income Level	below 15,000	41	20.5
	15,000 to 25,000	61	30.5
	25,000 to 35,000	46	23
	above 35,000	52	26

FINDINGS ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES

The organization follows many employee retention strategies to retain their employees for the future. Majority (89.5%) of the respondents have agreed that they are encouraged to participate in the training. Most (79%) of the respondents are satisfied with the recognition that they get for their performance. 75.5% of the respondents have stated that most of the times the implementation of 3R i.e. Respect, Reward and Recognition will increase the employee retention. Majority (69%) of the respondents have agreed that the organization comes forward to help the employees. Most (63%) of the respondents have agreed that the training program are linked with the career development. Around 78% of the respondents have agreed that the organization treats the employees in a respectful manner and only 1% have strongly disagreed. 63% of the respondents have agreed that they are rewarded periodically for their performance.

RESULTS ON CHI SQUARE TEST

Chi square test was used to find out the difference between the Income and Workload of the Respondents. There are two hypotheses were tested through this method as below.

H₀: There is no significant difference between the Income and Workload of the Respondents.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the Income and Workload of the Respondents.

Applying χ^2 Test:

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
0	0.44	-0.44	0.1936	0.44
2	0.64	1.36	1.8496	2.89
0	0.46	-0.46	0.2116	0.46
0	0.46	-0.46	0.2116	0.46
18	20.24	-2.24	5.0176	0.24791
20	29.44	-9.44	89.1136	3.02696
28	21.16	6.84	46.7856	2.21104
26	21.16	4.84	23.4256	1.10707
26	22.44	3.56	12.6736	0.56478
38	32.64	5.36	28.7296	0.8802
18	23.46	-5.46	29.8116	1.27074
20	23.46	-3.46	11.9716	0.5103
0	0.88	-0.88	0.7744	0.88
4	1.28	2.72	7.3984	5.78
0	0.92	-0.92	0.8464	0.92
0	0.92	-0.92	0.8464	0.92
			Total	22.569

$$\gamma = (r-1)(c-1)$$

$$\gamma = (5-1)(4-1)$$

$$\gamma = 4 \times 3$$

$$\gamma = 12$$

Calculated value is higher than the Tabulated value.

$$\therefore \text{Calculated } \chi^2 \geq \text{Tabulated } \chi^2$$

$$22.57 \geq 21.026$$

There fore H₁ is accepted (i.e.) There is a significant difference between the Income and Workload in Organization.

AGE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SUPERVISOR

The two variables namely Age and relationship with the superiors are tested thorough chi square method as below. The following hypotheses are used for the test.

H₀: There is no significant difference between the Age and relationship with the Supervisors.H₁: There is significant difference between the Age and relationship with the Supervisors.Applying χ^2 Test

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
0	0.58	-0.58	0.3364	0.58
2	1.18	0.82	0.6724	0.56983
0	0.2	-0.2	0.04	0.2
0	0.04	-0.04	0.0016	0.04
4	1.74	2.26	5.1076	2.9354
2	3.54	-1.54	2.3716	0.66994
0	0.6	-0.6	0.36	0.6
0	0.12	-0.12	0.0144	0.12
12	12.76	-0.76	0.5776	0.04527
28	25.96	2.04	4.1616	0.16031
0	4.4	-4.4	19.36	4.4
4	0.88	3.12	9.7344	11.0618
28	31.32	-3.32	11.0224	0.35193
64	63.72	0.28	0.0784	0.00123
16	10.8	5.2	27.04	2.5037
0	2.16	-2.16	4.6656	2.16
14	11.6	2.4	5.76	0.49655
22	23.6	-1.6	2.56	0.10847
4	4	0	0	0
0	0.8	-0.8	0.64	0.8
			Total	27.8045

$$\gamma = (r-1)(c-1)$$

$$\gamma = (5-1)(4-1)$$

$$\gamma = 4 \times 3$$

$$\gamma = 12$$

Calculated value is higher than the Tabulated value.

$$\therefore \text{Calculated } \chi^2 \geq \text{Tabulated } \chi^2$$

$$27.80 \geq 21.026$$

There fore H₁ is accepted (i.e.) There is a significant difference between the age and Relationship with Superiors in Organization.

FINDINGS ON CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The correlation test is used to analyze the relationship between two variables as designation of the respondents and the support rendered by the management to their employees. Designation of the respondents denoted as 'x' and the management support is expressed as 'y' in the analysis.

X	y	x ²	y ²	xy
48	16	2304	256	768
52	20	2704	400	1040
14	57	196	3249	798
40	97	1600	9409	3880
46	10	2116	100	460
ΣX=200	ΣY=200	Σ x²=8920	Σ y²=13414	Σ xy=6946

$$\frac{n\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

$$\frac{5*6946 - (200*200)}{\sqrt{5*8920 - (200)^2} \sqrt{5*13414 - (200)^2}}$$

$$r = 0.4723$$

$$\frac{n\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

$$\frac{5*6946 - (200*200)}{\sqrt{5*8920 - (200)^2} \sqrt{5*13414 - (200)^2}}$$

$$r = 0.4723$$

Designation of the respondents has the negative correlation with Management Support i.e. the support rendered by the management is not dependent on the designation of the respondents.

FINDINGS ON ANOVA ANALYSIS

ANOVA used to know the variance between two variables like designation of the respondents and the respect they get from the organization. Let us take the null hypothesis that there is no significant different between designation and respect in the organization.

Level Of Significance = 5%

Designation I	Organization II
48	2
52	14
14	34
40	124
46	26
T1= 200	T2= 200

$$\text{Grand Total } G = \sum \sum y_{ij}$$

$$= 200 + 200$$

$$G = 400$$

$$\text{Correction Factor} = \frac{G^2}{N} = \frac{400^2}{10} = 16,000$$

Total Sum of Squares,

$$SST = \sum \sum y_{ij}^2 = \frac{G^2}{N}$$

$$= ((48)^2 + 52^2 + 14^2 + 40^2 + 46^2 + 2^2 + 14^2 + 34^2 + 124^2 + 26^2) - 16,000$$

$$\text{Total Sum of Squares (TSS)} = 10,328$$

Between sample sum of square

$$R_1 = SSB = \sum_{i=0}^k \frac{T_i^2}{r_i} - \frac{G^2}{N}$$

$$R_1 = \frac{200^2}{5} + \frac{200^2}{5} - \frac{G^2}{N}$$

$$R_1 = 8000 + 8000 - 16,000$$

$$R_1 = 0.$$

Error Sum of square

$$R_2 = SSW = SST - R_1$$

$$= 10,328.$$

ANOVA

Source of variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares (SS)	Mean square (MS)	Variance Ratio (F Ratio)
Between Samples	1	0	MSB = R1/K1 = 0	F = 0
Without Samples	8	10,328	MSW = R2/ (N-K) = 10328 / 8 = 1291	

$$F(0.05) = (2-1), (10-3)$$

$$= 1, 8$$

Table Value of F @ 5% significant level = 5.32.

The calculated value is less than the table value of F, hence we accept the null hypothesis and concluded that there is no significant difference between the Designation of the respondents and the Organization treating their employees in a respectful manner.

SUGGESTIONS

Most of the respondents feel that training helps them to develop themselves. So the training program can be conducted very often to increase the satisfaction level of employees and to enhance their career development. Since many organizations provide these benefits, they need to focus on the specific needs or

desires of the employees and try to satisfy them as much as possible. Also, they could provide the employees with various financial benefits like Employee Stock Option Plans (ESOP) which would bind the employees with the organization for a long period. Attrition is a major challenge faced by the BPO Sectors. In order to avoid that they need to carry out strategic selection and training procedures to recruit the right type of candidates at the right time. Management can take more steps to listen towards the problems faced by the employees because only 36% are satisfied with the management regarding the problems. The companies could implement knowledge management system in the organization. The companies could create some more levels in the hierarchy. The career advancement in the ITES & BPO sectors is very limited because only few personnel hierarchical levels are there in these sectors like: agent, team leader, supervisor, Center Manager. They could follow flexible work options like Flexi Time, Flexi Place, Alternative Work Schedule, Part time Employment, Compressed Work Week, Job Rotation, Job Enlargement etc. in order to boost the satisfaction level of the employees.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study is to analyze the techniques undertaken in the organization in case of retention. Hence the organization adopts Career advancement opportunities, Challenging work, Salary, Employee benefits, Motivation etc. The company follows effective retention practices, so the turnover is very less in the organization. The study was conducted in a successful manner and the suggestions were given for the betterment of the organization. The project was conducted to analyze the factors that are influencing retention rate. Thus the organization needs to implement the various strategies to retain the employees.

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