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Determinants of Call Centre Employee's Turnover in Pakistan - An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find the determinants of call centre employee's turn over in Pakistan. This study would answer Why employees quit call centres job in Pakistan and does not last for long. Little is known about the employs experience and real issue, that why did they quit. Eight employees were interviewed who have worked in the call centres. The interviews were qualitative and were analysed by drawing on the phenomenological method. The employees revealed that there are limited career opportunities in the call centres. Most participants stated that time schedule, stressed working environment and excessive work load were that major factor which urged them to quit the job too early. Participants stated the time schedule as a major factor which negatively impacted on their social and personal lives. In conclusion, this research provides the basis for human resource management to work on the real factor which spark the employee turnover in call centres of Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Employee's turnover is exorbitant to the company, with substitution costs assessed to run from 32 to 114 percent of an employee's annual earning (Collin, Collins, McKinnies, & Matthews, 2015) . Employee's turnover cost reaches beyond the actual cost of hiring new employee, which negatively affects efficiency of the business operations and client services. (Park & Shaw, 2013). Call centres are rising as the major source for client access for numerous organizations and are quickly turning into a key wellspring of client behaviour learning and becoming major wellspring of competitive advantage in an inexorably client driven world (Anton, 2002) . A study of The Economist estimates the yearly development of call centres of the south Asia at 35% and in Western Europe at 45%. Noteworthy gain related to call centres are characterized by an expanded chance to convey, sustain, and retention of consumer loyalty. Call centres can also be seen as a nexus of client data that can be converted into promotional tactics and extracted client or customer information can be used as tool to develop the better products and services (Peppers, Rogers, & Dorf, 1999).

The development of call centres has been powered by the advanced communication means and information technology to focus on the client services and product feedback (Dormann & Zijlstra, 2003). The achievements of a call centre depend on the blend of technological

advancement, administrative attitude, Committed and loyal employees (Ananthram, Teo, Connell, & Bish, 2017). The most widely recognized assessment for the call centre employees is short reaction time (responding telephone calls rapidly) and worker efficiency to satisfy the customer in a given timeframe (Suff, Reilly, & Mercer, 2005).

Employee's turnover is a major issue that call centres confront (Taylor & Bain, 1998). Average employee's turnover in the call centers lie between 35 to 50% every year (IBISWorld, 2008). Call centers employee's turnover increases the cost of business operations (Choi, Cheong, & Feinberg, 2012). Holman, Bat, & Holtgrewe (2007) states that 33% of the call center employees quit the job less than a year. Call center Personnel are the salient workers who communicate with clients that are constantly judged and checked by administration (Mahesh & Kasturi, 2006).

Call centres are prospering in the marketing services to gain the competitive edge (Gilmore, 2001). Call centre employees have the ability to retain the existing customers, attracting new customers and establishing solid bond between clients and the company (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004). Excellent call centre services can play a vital role in success of the business. Call centre employee's primary task is to interact directly with customers, note down their requirements and answer their questions regarding the product (Blau, Zapf, Isic, & Bechtoldt, 2010). Employee's turnover in the call centre industry can be costly to the products and services of the organisation (Hillmer , Hillmer, & McRoberts, 2004).

Purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the determinants of call centre employee's turnover in Pakistan. Why tenure of call centres employee's is very short (Wallace, Eagleson, & Waldersee, 2000). This study would answer "Why" employees quit call centres job in Pakistan and does not last for long. The target population involves for this research are employees worked in the call centres located in Lahore, Pakistan. The objective of this exploratory research is to provide the reasons of employee turnover to HR experts to manage the issue. HR experts in call centres are dependably looking for best courses through which they can develop the strategy to control the turnover proportion in the call centres.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Every organisation has different employee turnover rate. Unlike government sector, private sector has higher turnover of employees (Bajwa, Yousaf, & Rizwan, 2014). Turnover intension is believed to be as rational procedure of reasoning, planning, and craving to leave work (Mobley W. , 1977). Modern researchers explain that there are two paths by which employee quits the job, voluntary and involuntary turnover (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012). Voluntary turnover means when employee quit the job intentionally and willingly in the absence of internal or external pressure (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012). Involuntary turnover means when there are some external or internal pressure on the employee to quit the job (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012). Previous researches indicate that job satisfaction has a greater impact on the employee's turn over (Bluedorn, 1982)and the tendency to quit (Griffeth, W. , & Gaertner, 2000). It has been approved by the literature that there is strong negative relationship between employee turnover and job satisfaction (Lee & Rwigema, 2007).The same conclusion had also been proposed earlier by

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Lee, Mowday (1987) & Tett, Meyer (1993) that intention to quit was negatively but significantly related to job satisfaction, also suggested that quitting the job and job satisfaction has significantly negative relationship. Quitting job and intension to quit has the same value in the eyes of employer.

There are some other factors has also been identified by the researcher, which urge the employees to leave the job, that includes Job Security and assurance, organizational behaviour and individual's experiences, Employee's performance, other Job options, and external factors such as family, location Etc. (Lee & Mowday, 1987).

Along with other factors, employees' demographics have significant impact on the employee's turnover. There are some specific organisations which prefer to hire employee according to their demographics, industries where physical health is more important as compare to mental health. Those organisations hire youngster, on the other hand some organisations prefer to hire middle age and experienced employee rather youngster (Madera, Dawson, & Neal, 2014).

Quality function deployment model (QFD) to identify the employee turnover risk factors by Wang, Wang, Xu, Ji, (2014) used to categorize the factors influencing turnover as external, internal, and employee status. External factors include new job availability, Economics conditions and company's location, where Internal factors include growth and increment, organisational environment, Organisational culture and organisational politics and the last one is Employee status includes individual's experience, family friends, academic background, health issue, and personality traits (Wang, Wang, Xu, & Ji, 2014).

Employee turnover is not only a significant tangible cost but also an intangible or hidden cost associated with loss of skills, inefficiency and replacement costs (Lashley & Chaplian, 1999). There are some other researches has also been conducted to explore the factors of employee turnover and found that firms who are investing more in R&D and producing more commercial product have higher rate of employees turnover. Moreover, employees who learn skills in the organisation, they switch the job rapidly for higher salaries (Eriksson, Qin, & Wang, 2014). Studies have shown that loss of productivity caused by employee turnover accounts for more than two-thirds of the total turnover costs (Tracey & Hinkin, 2010).As turnover escalates, service quality shrinks as it takes time to replace departing employees (Lynn, 2002). Some modern researcher have aloso found that found that fun activities had a favourable impact on performance and manager support for fun had a favourable impact in reducing turnover (Ruppel, Clarke, & Yuropa, 2014).

Researches in different fields of work have discovered likenesses and contrasts in explanations behind the individual leaving their place of business. Some reasons for employee's turnover or intentions to quit include are Job satisfaction, salary and increments, manager employee bond, job description and workplace environment (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). Factors influencing intention to quit or stay are not opposite but are the same in different scenarios (Wendy, Augsberger, Auerbach, & McGowan, 2014).

Researchers have worked a lot on the topic of employee's turnover in different setups and organisations however there are very few studies available which explore the real factors of employee's turnover in Call centres of Pakistan.

METHODOLOGY

The present study wants to shed light on the determinants of the call centre employee's turnover in Pakistan. It need to be explored the determinants of employee's turnover in call centres of Pakistan. Population of the study is employees worked in the call centres and have quit the job. 8 Interviews were conducted with different participant to collect the data (Benbasat, Goldstein, & Mead, 1987). Interview was chosen as the data collection technique in this study because it allows the interviewer to completely explore the participant responses. Participants were given opportunity to express their experiences. (Dörnyei, 2007) states that interview is natural and socially acceptable way to collect data. Participant names and organisations will not be revealed at any point. (Alshenqeeti, 2014). At 1st contact with participants author introduced himself as university research student. Authors began the interview by providing brief introduction about the study. Participant was interviewed by author (Hagens, Dobrow, & Chafe, 2009) and interview approximately lasted 30 to 35 mints. it was recorded on mobile device with the permission of participants. Recordings were listen carefully more than one time and Later transcribed for analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis was based on a phenomenological method. This method consists of 5 following steps (Giorgi, 1992).

a) Listening and Transcription of interviews
b) Proofreading of Transcription
c) The breaking up of the data in the units of meaning.
d) The reorganization of the data drawing on categories of meaning emerging from the data.
e) The synthesis of the data through the process of writing-up. The categories of meaning captured the content of the interviews.

FINDINGS

This part of the study consists on findings of the study. Six major themes emerged from the analysis of data. The themes that emerged from data are,

a) Career limitation
b) Working place learning
c) Hectic time schedule
d) Excessive workload
e) Less Challenging Job Nature
f) Stressed Working Environment

Career limitations

The analysis of qualitative interviews revealed that career limitation is one of the major factor of employee's turnover in call centres. Call Centre job is seen as part time job. Most of the participants joined the call centre during studies or just after completing the degree. A participant stated that

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> *"I was free from the studies and was applying for the job in different organisations. One of my friend suggested me, why don't you apply in the call centre until you don't get a proper job. "*

another participant stated that

> *"I joined call centre during my studies to earn some extra money. I have good communication skills so I decided to join call centre."*

Employees in call centre does not want to peruse their Carrere in this industry. It seems as a temporary job, so when employees get the job related to their academic backroad they quit.

Workplace learning

Another factor of employee's turnover in call centre is that people join the call centre to enhance their communication skills. After analysis of the interview it was found that most of the call centres use English as the medium of communication. One participant revealed that,

> *"to be very honest…... I …. joined the call centre to improve my English. That was the only reason I joined and yea…... it paid my bills as well, almost 8 months later I quit and got the job related to my academic background."*

This is one of the major reason why employees quit call centre job is short time. Employees don't take call centre job as career opportunity.

Hectic Time Schedule

Participants revealed that they we not satisfied with the timings of the job. They felt that timing in the call centres was exhausting. One participant stated that

> *"timing was strange, like it was in shifts, there was no fix time, it was rotating, it was quite common that your time slot was form 7AM to 3PM and at the same night they can call you from 12AM to 8AM. I wasn't satisfied with the timing. It was quite irritating. It even disturbed my social and personal life"*

Another participant stated that

> *"I…... worked almost 4 months in the call centre and quit just because of the timing."*

Analysis revealed that timings of call centers is one of the major factor that urge employees to quit the job.

Excessive Workload

It was found after analysis of the interviews that excessive work load one of the main factor which shorten the tenure of employee in call centers. A participant stated that

> *"sometimes work load increases like hell, it was very common that in 8 hours shift I was 7 hours on the phone without any break. That was very problematic. Sometimes my throat started to hurt."*

Less Challenging Job Nature

Participants revealed that their nature of the job was very disturbing. They felt that their duty was very repetitive. Most of the participant stated that call center job is an unchallenged work and It is waste of their potential & skills. A participant stated that,

> *"all day long, same work, ...calls, calls and call, there was nothing to gain. I was fed up with the same tasks each day. I was told by the parent that while sleeping Ispoke 'how may I help you' many times."*

Stressed Working Environment

Analysis revealed that call centers have extremely stressed working environment. Employees constantly monitored through technology by supervisors. In case of any negligence, system automatically report to supervisor which cause loss of point of the employee. That negatively impact on the salaries of employees. A participant stated that

> *"sometimes I missed to attend the call of the customer, which could lead to cut my point, and at the end of the month it caused to reduce my salary. call center system is like, you need to satisfy the customer in one mint, which lead to reward at the end of the month, if you are would not satisfy the customer this also negatively impact on reward point. It was very common that customers ask the question which make no scene but what to do. Customers mostly demand to talk with higher authorities.in this case too supervisor cut the points."*

Employees stated that this procedure demotivated them which cause to quit the job. Stressed working environment found as the major factor of employee turnover in call centers of Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The current study addresses the question, what factors influence employee turnover in call centres of Pakistan? This focal question is important because it addresses a relatively under researched area of employee turnover of call centres in Pakistan. There are limited studies dedicated to exploring the real issue in the context of the call centres. This significant gap in the literature is indicative of a lack in understanding what are the major reasons of employee turnover in Pakistan.

The research objective was accomplished through conducting the interviews with employees who worked in call centres. In sum, this study addresses the major factor of employee's turnover in call centres of Pakistan. Findings suggest that employee enter in call centres with the belief that there is limited career development in this sector. Call centre job is not seen as the appropriate job by the employees where they can pursue their career. Most of the employees join the call centre just because they can't find other job as according to their academic background. The findings indicate that timing schedule is one of major reason of employee turnover. Hectic timings disturb the social life of employees which cause the high turnover rate in call centres. Call centre is a stressed working place as according to analysis of this study. This research has established the fact that there is great need to work on the factors which has been explored in this study. In conclusion, this

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research provides the basis for human resource management to work on the real factor which spark the employee turnover in call centres of Pakistan.

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