

**AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN BPO SECTOR,
CHENNAI**

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ABSTRACT

The survey revolves around the identifications of the level of stress. This research is being conducted as a part of the individual development and strategies that organizations and individuals adopt to overcome workplace stress.

Retaining HR is a very tough job for any organization. It depends on various factors such as salary, perks, job security, organization process, authority and responsibility. It also depends on the perception and attitude of the individual in the organization.

The survey is also conducted to find out the symptoms of stress which affects the individual regarding both personality and work. The survey focuses on various stress reduction techniques which helps the individuals to reduce their stress level.

The study of stress is very important, as it seeks a permanent place in all IT Companies. It is a fact that modern life is full of stress. As organization's become more Complex, the degree of stress increases. Stress cannot be avoided, but can be reduced to the lowest extent possible.

Introduction – Occupational Stress In BPO Sector

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is the delegation of one or more IT-intensive business processes to an external provider that in turn owns administers and manages the selected process based on defined and measurable performance criteria. Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is one of the fastest growing segments of the Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) industry.

Different Types of Services Being Offered by BPO's:

Customer Support Services

Customer service offerings create a virtual customer service center to manage customer concerns and queries through multiple channels including voice, e-mail and chat on a 24/7 and 365 days basis.

Technical Support Services

Technical support offerings include round-the-clock technical support and problem resolution for OEM customers and computer hardware, software, peripherals and Internet infrastructure manufacturing companies. These include installation and product support, up & running support, troubleshooting and Usage support.

Telemarketing Services

Telesales and telemarketing outsourcing services target interaction with potential customers for 'prospecting' like either for generating interest in products and services, or to up-sell / promote and cross sell to an existing customer base or to complete the sales process online.

Business Process Outsourcing: The Top Rankers

The basis of ranking is the revenues generated by the BPO companies in 2009-2010, as per US GAAP. A list of top five BPO companies in India is given below.

1. WNS Group
2. Wipro BPO
3. Daksh e-Services
4. Convergys
5. HCL Technologies

The parameters for the survey was: Employee Size (Operation level executives), Percentage of last salary hike, Cost to company, Overall Satisfaction Score, Composite Satisfaction, Company Culture, Job Content / Growth, Training, Salary and Compensation, Appraisal System, People, Preferred Company: (Percentage of respondents of a company who named their own company as the preferred one), Dream Company: (Percentage of respondents in the total sample who preferred a particular company).

OBJECTIVES OF STRESS IN BPO SECTOR

- To study the level of stress faced by the employees in BPO.
- To identify the factors that affects the organizational stressors.
- To analyze various factors of stress.

The study various personal factors causes stress personally and how an individual respond to psychological, behavioral, emotionally and intellectually are covered.

Stress is a part of day-to-day living every individual. The reasons for the stress differ from person to person.

The stress people experience should not be necessarily treated as harmful. An optimum amount of stress can always act as an energizer of motivator.

Job related stress arise on account of unrealistic project delivery dates of milestones that need to be achieved with fewer resources.

Meaning of Occupational Stress:

Stress is derived from the Latin word "*Stringer*". In physical science the term stress

refers to the internal force generated within a solid body by the action any external force.

IVANCEVICH & MALTLESON define stress. "An adaptive response, mediated by individual characteristics and psychological process that is consequence of any external action, situation or event that places special physical and psychological demands upon a person."

CAUSES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN BPO SECTOR

Stress can be caused by plenty of things. A few of them are stated below:

- 1) Work overload
- 2) Poor relationship with superiors, colleagues and sub-ordinates.
- 3) Lack of Autonomy, i.e., no control over one's job and no participation in decision-making that affects the concerned person.
- 4) Role Ambiguity, i.e., an individual not being clear about what is being expected of him by his /her Boss in the work place.
- 5) Group conflict.

EFFECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN BPO SECTOR

STRESS RELATED ILLNESS:

Some of the stress related illness are as follows:

- ◆ High blood pressure
- ◆ Heart disease
- ◆ Arthritis
- ◆ Asthma
- ◆ Diabetes
- ◆ Stomach ulcers.

PHYSICAL PROBLEMS:

Some physical problems of stress include:

- ◆ Headaches
- ◆ Appetite changes
- ◆ Dizziness, etc.,

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS:

Some psychological effects of stress include:

- ◆ Anger
- ◆ Frustration
- ◆ Sleeplessness
- ◆ Tension
- ◆ Irritation
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Tiredness
- ◆ Dissatisfaction with life and/or job.

Stress can strongly affect personal life. In counter-productive attempts to cope with stress. Many individuals start relying on tobacco, alcohol and drugs, which further aggravate the problem. In simple terms, or in a simplified statement, stress is an adaptive response to an external factor which may result in physical psychological or behavioral changes in an individual.

YOU MUST LIKELY KNOW MANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS:

- ✓ Sadness and feeling down
- ✓ Feeling tired, run down and lack of energy
- ✓ Even small things can appear enormous
- ✓ Decreased or no desire for sex

- ✓ Preferring to be alone
- ✓ Feelings of anxiety
- ✓ Worries about everything and everyone
- ✓ The future appears dark and hopeless
- ✓ Difficulty concentrating
- ✓ Feeling more and more as a failure
- ✓ Even little things can irritate you
- ✓ Low self-esteem
- ✓ Pain without any physical causes
- ✓ Feeling that life is no longer worth living

TEN STEPS TO KEEP STRESS AWAY:

1. Regular exercise (movements of all body parts with focused attention).
2. Regular breaks/relaxation for 10 mts. every two hours.
3. Deep breathing (40 times in a day).
4. Eating sensibly and moderately.
5. Developing a good sense of humor.
6. Smile (smiling gesture).
7. Listening with empathy
8. Protecting yourself from negative thoughts/remarks.
9. Getting back into control (control the way you respond to others).
10. Focus on your goals (planning & setting goals).

DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL TOOLS

1)RANKCORRELATION:

STRESS ACCORDING TO ITS FACTORS

FACTORS	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Overload	3	17	31	43	56	150

Environment	17	29	25	53	26	150
Deadline	59	34	35	9	13	150
Personal Problem	45	33	24	18	30	150
Over anxiety	26	37	32	27	28	150

Assuming weightage for ranks:

1st rank-10 2nd rank-8 3rd rank-6 4th rank-4 5th rank-2

FACTORS	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Rank
Overload	30	136	186	172	112	636	5
Environment	170	232	150	212	52	816	4
Deadline	590	272	210	36	26	1134	1
Personal Problem	450	264	144	72	60	990	2
Over anxiety	260	296	192	108	56	912	3

Inference:

From the table it is inferred that majority of the employees ranked deadline work as the major cause of the stress. Following that personal problems are ranked second as the cause of their stress. Then over anxiety is ranked third. Environment factor is ranked fourth. Overload factor is ranked fifth.

Calculation:

X	Y	D _i =x _i -y _i	D _i ²
1	5	-4	16
2	4	-2	4
3	1	2	4
4	2	2	4
5	3	2	4
			$\sum d_i^2=32$

RANK CORRELATION FORMULAE:

$$\ell = 1 - \left\{ \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{n(n^2-1)} \right\}$$

Where $d_i = x_i - y_i$

n = number of terms

$$\ell \text{ Or } r(x, y) = 1 - \left\{ \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{n(n^2-1)} \right\}$$

$$\ell = 1 - \left\{ \frac{6(32)}{5(25-1)} \right\}$$

$$\ell = 1 - \{192/120\}$$

$$\ell = 1 - 1.6$$

$$\ell = -0.6$$

NOTE: The value should lie between -1 and +1.

RESULT:

Hence there is a relationship between stress according to its factors.

2)CHI – SQUARE TEST

There is a relationship between time bound work and stressful work.

Time bound work \ stressful work	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Often	39	23	8	70
Sometimes	4	12	4	20
Never	7	0	3	10
Total	50	35	15	100

Null hypothesis (H_0) :

There is no significant relationship between the time bound work and stressful work.

Alternative hypothesis (H_1) :

There is significant relationship between the time bound work and stressful work.

Chi – square test (χ^2) = $\sum (O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2 / E_{ij}$

O	E	(O – E)	(O – E)²	(O – E)²/E
39	35	4	16	0.457

4	10	-6	36	3.6
7	5	2	4	0.8
23	24.5	-1.5	2.25	0.0913
12	7	5	25	3.571
0	3.5	-3.5	12.25	3.5
8	10.5	-2.5	6.25	0.5952
4	3	1	1	0.333
3	1.5	1.5	2.25	1.5
			Total	14.4478

Calculated value $\chi^2 = 14.4478$

Level of significance = 0.05(5%)

Degree of freedom = (n-1) (r-1) = 4

Table value @ 5%significance $\chi^2 = 9.488$

Result : calculated value of χ^2 is greater than table value of χ^2 at 5% significance. Therefore

H₁ is accepted.

WEIGHTED AVERAGE METHOD

FACTORS	STRONGY AGREE	AGREE	MODERATE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE
Work Satisfaction	20	30	25	16	9
Decision Making	66	25	4	3	2

Subordinates	65	22	2	9	2
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FORMULA:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{(w_1 \cdot x_1) + (w_2 \cdot x_2) + (w_3 \cdot x_3) + \dots + (w_n \cdot x_n)}{w_1 + w_2 + w_3 + \dots + w_n}$$

CALCULATION:**WORK SATISFACTION:**

$$\begin{aligned} &= (20 \cdot 5) + (30 \cdot 4) + (25 \cdot 3) + (16 \cdot 2) + (9 \cdot 1) \\ &= 100 + 120 + 75 + 32 + 9 \\ &= 336 / 15 \\ &= 22.4 \end{aligned}$$

DECISION MARKING

$$\begin{aligned} &= (66 \cdot 5) + (25 \cdot 4) + (4 \cdot 3) + (3 \cdot 2) + (2 \cdot 1) \\ &= 330 + 100 + 12 + 6 + 2 \\ &= 450 / 15 \\ &= 30 \end{aligned}$$

SUBORDINATES

$$\begin{aligned} &= (65 \cdot 5) + (22 \cdot 4) + (2 \cdot 3) + (9 \cdot 2) + (2 \cdot 1) \\ &= 325 + 88 + 6 + 18 + 2 \\ &= 439 / 15 \\ &= 29.5 \end{aligned}$$

RESULT

This indicates the respondent's level of stress in Decision Making is the highest.

CONCLUSION

Stress is a simplified statement. It is an adaptive response to an external factor which may result in physical psychological and behavioral changes in an individual. Every employee is an asset to the organization. Hence, even a small percentage of dis-satisfaction should be redressed. Their opinions and suggestions considered and it is the duty of every organization to reduce the stress of the employees by satisfying them in redressing their grievances. It is believed that if the suggestions implemented by the management, there are chances for the employees to reduce their stress and increase the profitability of the concerns.

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