

Factors Affecting Tenured BPO Employees

Mila Mae A. Caballero

Cebu Institute of Technology - University
Cebu City, Philippines

Abstract: Working in a Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry is not stark easy considering the type of schedule employees have to endure, the straight long hours and work-life that can be scheduled during unholy nights. This study aims to find out the factors affecting tenured BPO employees that made them stay longer in the said industry considering the nature of work and the type of schedule. The current descriptive study made use of researcher-made questionnaires to gather primary data. The study finds out that most tenured employees value their work and tend to stay long in the company because they do not want to shift to another job, and they are financially satisfied to provide for their family's basic needs even though they qualify in other high-paying jobs. However, the BPO companies need to offer more incentives and fringe benefits in return to the invaluable service and loyalty of the tenured employees.

Keywords: Business Process Outsourcing, Tenured employees, high-paying jobs, Cebu, Philippines.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the Philippines is one of the many countries which gained popularity in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry and has contributed increasingly to the domestic economy because BPO carries with it high competency for business (Duening and Click, 2005). The first BPO company in the Philippines operated in 1992 and was succeeded by a substantial number of BPO firms (Rappler, 2015). In 2006, the BPO industry reached its hype particularly in Cebu City with thousands of individuals given the privilege to get employment. BPO companies cater to clients coming from the different parts of the globe. The nature of the job can be an inbound type in which the operation is taking incoming calls worldwide and it can also have an outbound counterpart which operates by calling businesses or conducting household surveys. The work schedule in a BPO company is so challenging in the sense that days are made into nights affecting employees' body clock, sleep patterns, and work-life balance (Vanishree, 2012).

With the increasing number of BPO companies in the country, countless number of employees still remain to be part of their workforce for 10 or more years. These employees who achieved the tenured status have endured the rigorous if not demanding nature of work and type of schedule that may have adverse effects in their family life, personal life, relationships with co-employees and management, and even their work-life.

With all these premises presented, the study aims to determine the factors that may directly or indirectly affect the tenured employees who have worked for 10 or more years in selected BPO companies in Cebu City.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study aims to determine the different factors affecting tenured employees who have worked for 10 or more years in a selected BPO company in Cebu City. It also purports to seek which of these factors prevent the tenured employees from leaving their companies. Moreover, it looks for initiatives that the BPO companies have instituted to make their tenured employees stay for 10 years or more.

2. METHODOLOGY

This descriptive study follows a Confirmatory Research Design where an already established theory has been tested on the field and is validated against the practice of the environment of the study. The Confirmatory Research Design is quantitative in nature and the sourcing of information to meet the specific and general objectives of this study is carried through a survey using questionnaires. The respondents are chosen using the purposive non-probability sampling

technique where criteria are set before choosing the respondents. It is required that the respondents are 10 years or more in the company to obtain credible information about their beliefs and perceptions. The questionnaires are retrieved, tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to come up with results that are needed to explain the answers to the study problems and questions. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. First, the demographic profile of the respondents and the second part are the questions involving the various factors associated with BPO company operations. The statistical tools used are the weighted mean and frequency percentage.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic profile of the respondents classifies the tenured employees according to the following parameters: age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, position in the company, average monthly income, number of dependents, and number of years in the company.

Evidently, Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents belong to the age range from 31 to 35. These ages have served the company for 10 years or more if the respondents started to work right after graduation. Tenured BPO employees that have been in the industry for a decade or more is quite telling of their continual devotion to work in the company. In the Philippine setting, it is already hard for prospective job-seekers to look for a regular job past the said age range. Moreover, the respondents belonging to the age bracket of 31 to 35 are already satisfied with their current jobs and also already reluctant to look for another job not to mention the period of adjustment and transit time of waiting from job application up until the time to be accepted.

Table 1: The demographic profile of the respondents

Parameters	Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age N = 50	20-25 years	0	0%
	26-30 years	2	4%
	31-35 years	31	62%
	Above 35 years	17	34%
Sex N = 50	Male	16	32%
	Female	34	68%
Civil Status N = 48	Single	26	56%
	Married	19	40%
	Separated	2	4%
Highest educational attainment N = 49	College level	5	10%
	College graduate	41	84%
	Post graduate	3	6%
Position in the company N = 44	Manager	10	23%
	Supervisor	14	32%
	Team leader	2	5%
	Others	28	40%
Monthly income N = 45	Php 10,001-20,000	3	7%
	Php 20,001-30,000	34	76%
	Php 30,001-40,000	6	13%
	Above Php 40,000	2	4%
No. of dependents N = 48	0	9	19%
	1	12	25%
	2	18	38%
	3	5	10%
	Above 3	4	8%
No. of years in the company N = 50	10 years	29	58%
	Above 10 years	21	42%

With regards to the sex of the respondents, BPO is female-dominated with 68% of the respondents are females. Women are perceived to be likely to work harder, more patient, less aggressive, and have better interpersonal communication skills (Pradhan and Abraham, 2005).

Considering the work schedule in the BPO industry, 56% are single and it is clear that these employees are free from any commitments afforded to spouses and children.

There are 84% of the total respondents who graduated in college which remains to be the least educational attainment required in order to be hired in a BPO. Most respondents hold supervisory position, a strong determinant of staying power in the company. With regards to dependents, 38% of the respondents have 2 dependents which is closely linked to the number of years of stay in the company. Forty two percent of the respondents are at least a decade already in the company and prefers to continue working for the sustenance of the persons reliant and much dependent on them.

Table 2 depicts the second and third parts of the questionnaire. The table consists of 23 statements containing factors regarding tenured BPO employees' perceptions on being a part of the company. Each statement is rated using a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The weighted mean is calculated per statement. Table 3 shows the weighted mean vis-a-vis their verbal interpretation.

Table 2: The questionnaire part on factors about the tenured BPO employees' perceptions being part of the company

	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Dis-agree 2	Dis-agree strongly 1	Mean	Rank
The income that I receive from my work can support my family.	6	22	13	7	1	3.51	5
I am contented with the work that I am in.	3	26	14	8	0	3.47	6
This is the only work that I think I am qualified.	3	3	6	13	24	1.94	20
I feel secured when I am in the BPO Industry	2	8	24	11	4	2.86	14
I can spend a lot of time with my family	2	18	16	9	5	3.06	13.5
This is the best job that I have ever encountered	2	16	20	6	4	3.13	11
I feel that BPO Industry molds me to become a better person	1	17	24	7	1	3.20	8
Workload in the BPO Industry is challenging and it suits my interest	2	17	22	7	1	3.24	7
I am able to meet new friends	12	26	4	8	0	3.84	3
I am well compensated with the work I have rendered; other companies cannot provide the same amount of compensation.	1	18	20	9	2	3.14	10.5
I do not want to switch jobs every now and then	18	21	5	6	0	4.02	1
I love to work during Sundays and even Holidays	5	6	14	9	16	2.50	16
I can buy whatever things I want	2	17	20	5	6	3.08	12.5
I feel superior if I am in the BPO Industry	1	8	14	12	15	2.36	17
I have a flexible schedule	1	16	9	15	10	2.67	15
I have been treated fairly by the management of the firm	3	17	19	8	3	3.18	9
I do not have enough qualifications to be employed in another company	5	4	5	17	20	2.16	19
They provide right away the things that I request from them.	2	14	24	6	4	3.08	12.5
Once I am employed I see to it that I will stay in the firm for a long time	18	19	7	5	1	3.96	2
In my company, tenured employees are preferred over new hires in terms of work allocation.	3	16	19	9	3	3.14	10.5
I prefer to have flexible schedule rather than having a regular 8 hour shift which is 8am to 5pm	3	15	19	10	4	3.06	13.5
I prefer to work at night	1	5	16	8	20	2.18	18
I make a living for my family	12	22	5	7	4	3.62	4

After the weighted means are determined, these are ranked and the five highest ranked statements are considered to be the main factors affecting the tenured BPO employees which are the highlighted rows in Table 2. Based on the survey, the top 2 ranked statements are closely related. The tenured BPO employees do not want to switch jobs every now and then and they plan on staying for a long time in a particular job once they are employed. It strongly signifies that the tenured BPO employees possess loyalty to a company. A theory that is associated to this finding is the Side-Bet Theory of Commitment. It theorizes that an employee is committed to become part of a certain organization wherein the investment of time, effort and continuity to become part of a certain organization has a great impact to the lives of every individual in a certain organization (Becker, 1960). The third highest ranked statement deals with meeting new friends. It expresses the sense of belongingness of the tenured BPO employees with their co-workers that is important as stated in McGregor's Hierarchy of Needs. In addition, the Social Exchange Theory of Blau (1964) also supports this finding which states that any individual has the capacity to mingle with any person, might be friends, colleagues or anyone in the society for whom this person can be able to share sentiments, gain friends, exchange thoughts and is contented and comfortable to deal with any person the he believes in can also consider him as one individual to be nonetheless comfortable to deal with. The fourth and fifth highest ranked statements are talking about tenured BPO employees making a living for their family and the income that is able to support and sustain their respective families. One can aver that BPO companies provide substantial salaries to their employees in that once they are employed, these employees will not anymore look for other jobs and develop loyalty towards the company in return. Aside from the salary, the BPO companies provide a friendly atmosphere for diverse personalities to blend in harmony with each other and for sure there are other positive aspects that employees are gratified about working in a BPO company. A sense of great satisfaction can be observed from the respondents' answers. According to Thompson (2002) as cited by Vanishree 2012, classified work life initiatives into five (5) categories namely, 1. Time-based strategies like flexi time, 2. Information-based strategies like relocation assistance, company work/life balance intranet. 3. Money-based strategies like leave with pay. 4. Direct services like on-site childcare, concierge services and takeout dinners, and 5. Culture change strategies like training focus on employees' performance not office face time. Most of these strategies, if not all, that Thompson has implied in his study clearly are practised by BPO companies that have positive effects on their tenured BPO employees in the study. On the other hand, as mentioned in the study of Bhuyar, et. al. (2008), call center workers face unique occupational hazards - mental, physical and psychosocial. These include disturbance in circadian rhythms due to night shift, obesity, eye and hearing problems, and psycho-social problems which include faulty eating, use of tobacco and alcohol to name a few. Truly, BPO companies have a great way of offsetting for the above-mentioned seemingly hostile scheduling and work environment that their employees experience. Lowest ranked statements involve some of the factors mentioned in Bhuyar, et al. study. Despite these problems which BPO employees might encounter, they still opt to remain in the company to show their dedication at work not to mention the love for family by supplying their needs. Employees find contentment in this type of work and are able to manage their work-life balance.

Table 3: The weighted means and their verbal interpretation

WEIGHTED MEAN	INTERPRETATION
4.20-5.00	Strongly Agree
3.40-4.19	Agree
2.60-3.39	Neither agree nor disagree
1.80-2.59	Disagree
1.00-1.79	Strongly Disagree

Furthermore, Sengupta (2011) found out that interpersonal relationships, career progression, salary, company policies, working conditions and authority have significant positive relationship with employee satisfaction. The findings of the study further strengthen the relationships of the aforementioned factors and employee satisfaction which can be observed from the tenured BPO employees' display of job dedication and company loyalty.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the stressful job in the BPO Industry, there are still employees who are devoted to stay in the company for a decade or more. In this study, it can be attributed to working with utmost loyalty in a BPO company as a high-paying job that would enable an employee to have decent living conditions and provide for family needs; obtain job satisfaction not making an option out of switching to another job; and meeting the need to belong and feel secured with new additional number of friends to work with on a daily basis. The five factors which greatly affect tenured BPO employees are job dedication, company loyalty, sense of belongingness, being family-oriented, and job contentment. If an employee is

dedicated and satisfied with his job, the positive aspects will outweigh the negative aspects in a company. Tenured BPO employees are making a living for their respective families by exhibiting a certain drive to hurdle the great demands of the job. BPO industry may seem to have fast turnovers and attrition rate but tenured BPO employees who are respondents of the study tend not to leave their current jobs and seem to attain the so-called work-life balance with the number of years of stay in the company. Work-life balance is defined as 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 (Crooker, et al., 2002).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to evaluate the fringe benefits and incentives that BPO companies offer to their employees. The BPO companies further needs to offer more incentives and fringe benefits in return to the invaluable service and loyalty of the tenured employees. In addition, it is highly recommended to conduct a study like this involving more BPO companies to gain more insights and to provide comparisons.

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