A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING ANXIETY ON BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING(BPO) EMPLOYEES WORKING IN CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

The destruction caused by the COVID -19 virus to humans is beyond imagination. This article elucidates the influence of anxiety by various factors during covid-19 pandemic on BPO employees working in Chennai. Covid-19 pandemic has paved the way of an entirely different lifestyle and has led to an era of uncertainty. This uncertainty has resulted in job insecurity among many employees of various sectors. However, the BPO Industry has seen a lot of layoffs in the past few years. This study mainly focuses on the anxiety caused by the job insecurity among BPO employees working in Chennai. A sample of 148 participants were studied and analyzed to understand the causes of anxiety among the employees. The relationship among the various factors influencing anxiety has been determined by performing Confirmatory Factor Analysis(CFA). Regression analysis has also been performed to study the relationship between gender of the employees and the effects due to anxiety. This report also provides an insight on the impact the anxiety has caused and various ways to prevail over the anxiety issues.

Key words: Anxiety, BPO industry, layoff, job insecurity

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an immense impact on hospital systems, businesses, schools, and the economy. Telemedicine, telework, and online education become essential to help society slow down the spread of the coronavirus. The pandemic has generated a rapid

demand for efforts to use innovative technologies to cope with damage from COVID-19 on our life (He et al., 2021).

Contracting an external service provider to fulfill a business function or process is known as business process outsourcing (BPO). In the modern business world, outsourced processes are often reliant on technology in some way or another and may be referred to as information technology-enabled services (ITES). It was traditionally used by manufacturing companies, but has increasingly been used across a wide range of industries.

There has been a growing amount of research into the psychological (un)well-being of workers, including stress and burnout (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The psychological effects of unemployment have also received much research attention in recent decades (Feather, 2012; Jahoda, 1982). The subject of "job insecurity" has now become a major source of anxiety and stress in current generation employees. It relates to people at work who fear they might lose their jobs and become unemployed.

There are several psychological difficulties among software professionals caused by occupational anxieties such as severe resentment, impractical expectations from superiors, achievement orientation, and the inability to accept failure. Because of their work environment, people in the field of information technology (IT) frequently experience anxiety, depression, and loneliness, as well as feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and dissatisfaction.

There are numerous mental and physical problems that can be caused by long working hours, stress and pressure at work, night shifts, and lack of sleep. As a state of inner turmoil, anxiety is characterized by nervous behavior, such as pacing, somatic complaints, and ruminations. It is the subjective experience of feeling dreadful about something unlikely to happen, such as impending death. As opposed to fear, which is a response to a perceived threat that is realistically intimidating or dangerous, anxiety is a feeling of fear, worry, and uneasiness, usually generalized and unfocused due to an overreaction to a situation that is only perceived as frightening subjectively. There are several ways to help professionals overcome stress and maintain a balanced life, including relaxation training, cognitive therapy, and assertiveness training(Nayak, 2014).

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the influencing factors of anxiety on BPO employees working in Chennai.
- To study the relationship between the gender of the employees and the effects of anxiety.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on the psychological consequences of job insecurity has shown that it reduces psychological well-being and job satisfaction, and increases psychosomatic complaints and physical strains. This exploratory study found that job insecurity was associated with lower well-being (score on the GHQ-12), after controlling for background variables, such as gender and age. Gender moderated the association between job insecurity and well-being, but not among women. Interaction terms for occupational position and age were not statistically significant. The GHQ-scores of the insecure respondents were not different from those of a representative sample of short-term unemployed, suggesting both experiences to be equally harmful. The consequences of these findings for future research are discussed(Witte, 1999).

This meta-analysis examined the relationship between job insecurity and its job-related and health-related consequences, with 133 studies providing 172 independent samples. The main differences between the findings are that the negative association between job insecurity was significant and that the relationship between insecurity and job involvement was smaller. Results are discussed with reference to Hulin's theory of job adaptation and Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's job dependence perspective(Cheng & Chan, 2008).

In the aftermath of national lockdown due to Covid-19, several organizations were forced to opt for remote working, which provides several challenges and opportunities to the employees and employer. The reason for carrying out this empirical study is that the subject is new, challenging, and occupational stress exists everywhere; also, inadequate research has been reported on such types of studies. This empirical study reports the results of the effect of occupational stress and remote working on employees' psychological well-being in the Information Technology industry(Prasad et al., 2020).

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The destruction caused by the COVID-19 virus to humans is beyond imagination. This article aims to explain how COVID-19 is identified as a threat to human life. This statistical report explains how some countries were heavily affected by this pandemic. Even in the most developed nations, medical advancements and the impact of inadequate medical facilities can be seen. Various effective algorithms for the diagnosis and prevention of the disease have been developed with the help of Information Technology (IT). This research article also covers the responsibilities of the various social media along with their vulnerable efforts in carrying awareness to society(Sathish et al., 2020).

This study aims to understand the dimensions contributing to the well-being of software professionals and mechanical professionals. It includes 100 professionals from Bangalore IT companies and banks, and 50 mechanical professionals from Jindal Industry Hospet and Railway workshop Hubli Karnataka State, India. The results revealed that software professionals differed in the level of anxiety when compared with mechanical professionals, but significant relations were found in only the psychological dimension of mental health (Nayak, 2014).

This study is the first longitudinal study of IT worker mental health and the first to examine incident mental health conditions. IT workers have a lower overall risk of incident anxiety/depression compared to all other employed UK Biobank participants, but IT technicians have a higher odds of requiring GP or psychiatric attendance. Self-reported loneliness is higher in IT professionals and technicians compared to IT managers and workers with similar occupational classifications. This study sets a benchmark in our understanding and provides important implications for targeting and informing effective mental health workplace interventions(Lalloo et al., 2022).

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The experimental research design was used in this study. An experimental approach to research involves manipulating and applying independent variables to dependent variables to measure their effects on the former. It is usually observed and recorded over time how independent

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variables affect dependent variables, which allows researchers to draw reasonable conclusions about their relationship.

DATA COLLECTION

- The quantitative research design was utilized in this study, where a survey was allotted by sending the questionnaire to the employees working in various BPO firms in Chennai.
- Primary data was collected through an online structured questionnaire which contained closed ended questions, prepared with the help of Google Forms.
- Secondary data was collected from various articles and books.
- Snowball sampling and convenience sampling techniques for data collection were also employed for various reasons.

TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

- The questionnaire data was analyzed using SPSS software.
- Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to study the relationship between anxiety and its causes.
- Regression analysis was also performed to understand the relationship between the gender of the employees and the effects due to anxiety.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The relationship between anxiety among BPO employees and the factors influencing them are studied with the help of Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The factors analyzed in this study includes role stagnation, work overload, personal inadequacy, role ambiguity, resource inadequacy, co-workers, higher officials, psychological factors, job control and salary. The path diagram in Fig.1 shows the relationship between anxiety and the above mentioned factors. The oval in the diagram represents latent variables while the rectangles represent observed variables.
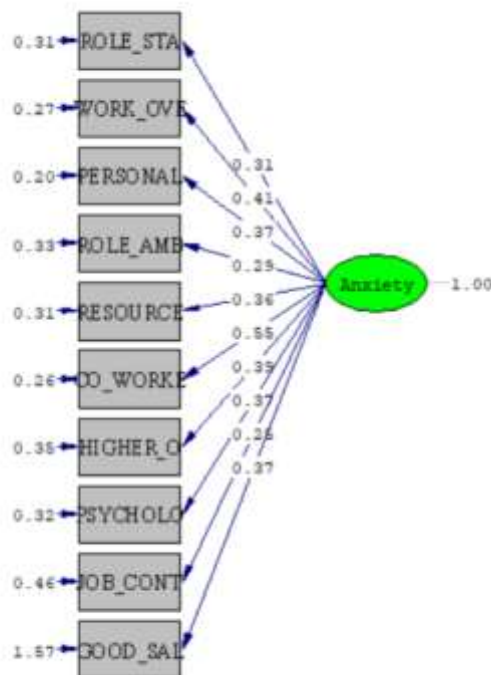
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Fig. 1: Path diagram for Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 1 represents the fit Indices of the analysis performed. It shows different indices, their names and the calculated value. The p-value of the chi-square index is 0.061. RMSEA is an important index to determine if the model is fit. The value of the RMSEA index was found to be 0.06. The values of NFI and NNFI are 0.95 and 0.97, respectively. The value of CFI is 0.93 and the value of SRMR is 0.072. The values of GFI and AGFI are 0.92 and 0.91 respectively. For a good CFA model, the AGFI values must be greater than 0.90(AGFI>0.90). Since the AGFI value was found to be greater than 0.90, it can be understood that the model is fit and the relationship between anxiety among BPO employees and the factors influencing them exists.

Table 1: Fit Indices

FIT INDEX	NAME	VALUE
$\chi 2$	Chi-square	0.061

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RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	0.06
NFI	Normed Fit Index	0.95
NNFI	Non-Normed Fit Index	0.97
CFI	Comparative Fit Index	0.93
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual	0.072
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index	0.92
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index	0.91

The model summary of regression analysis is shown in Table 2. This table provides the R and R square values. The R value represents the simple correlation and is 0.194, which indicates low degree of correlation. This means that the dependent variable and the independent variables are hardly related. It can be inferred from this table that the effects due to anxiety are common, irrespective of the gender of the employees.

Table 2: Model Summary of Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.194[a]	.037	.011	.468

a. Predictors: (Constant), DRUG ADDICTION, HEADACHES, INSOMNIA, DEPRESSION

Table 3 is the ANOVA table which reports how well the regression equation fits the data. The table shows significance value, p is greater than 0.05 which indicates that there is no significant relationship between the gender of the employees and the effects of anxiety.

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Table 3: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.217	4	.304	1.391	.240[b]
	Residual	31.289	143	.219		
	Total	32.507	147			

a. Dependent Variable: GENDER
b. Predictors: (Constant), DRUG ADDICTION, HEADACHES, INSOMNIA, DEPRESSION

It can be inferred from Table 4 that out of the four effects of anxiety, the unstandardized coefficient B for insomnia and depression is positive while headaches and drug addiction is negative. This shows that the headaches and drug addiction is negatively related with the gender of the employees.

Table 4: Regression analysis between gender and the effects of anxiety

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.210	.122		9.907	.000
	INSOMNIA X1	.004	.039	.011	.103	.918
	DEPRESSION X2	.076	.042	.209	1.822	.071
	HEADACHES X3	-.011	.044	-.028	-.241	.810
	DRUG ADDICTION X4	-.065	.038	-.177	-1.699	.092

a. Dependent Variable: GENDER Y

The Table 4 also shows that the significance value of all the four effects to be greater than 0.05. The significance values of insomnia, depression, headaches, drug addiction are $p=0.918$, $p=0.071$, $p=0.810$ and $p=0.092$ respectively. Since all the p values are greater than 0.05, it can be understood that the gender of the employees does not significantly predict the effects of anxiety. The equation for the regression is, $Y = 0.004X1 + 0.076X2 - 0.011X3 - 0.065X4 + 1.210$.

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CONCLUSION

The Indian Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry is growing rapidly with the help of advancements in technology, but it has its own challenges. The major part of employees working in BPO firms are young adults who are vulnerable to the stress and anxiety caused due to various factors as discussed in this study. It was found that the factors discussed in this study have an impact on the employees by developing anxiety and job insecurity. Each organization must develop different programs for the employees to manage their fears and to overcome their obstacles. The organizations should analyze and understand the causes of anxiety among the employees and work towards minimizing them. They should consider the psychological health of the employees while planning welfare activities. It is necessary for the organizations to create awareness measures to make the employees understand the importance of psychological health along with emotional and physical health.

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