



## Analysis of Demographic Differences and Stesses Among BPO Employees

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### ABSTRACT

The rationale of the present study is to analyze the demographic profile of the employees in the BPO industry and to study each gender. With the identification of differences in responses for each gender, the author has based this study on key predictor i.e. Multiple of (gender based) demographic variables. Briefly, this paper determined parameter such as- differences between jobs performed by males and females, differences between stress responses of males and females, effectiveness of employee assistance program for BPO employees of each gender. In this paper, analysis of data is done in two parts – descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. In the descriptive part, the demography of statistical sample is examined and the results have been shown in percentage analyses, frequency tables. Analytical details about demographic such as gender, age, annual income, education, level in management and perceived effectiveness of employee assistance programs for males and females BPO's employees are explained in this paper. It has also been concluded that all existing employee assistance programs are not perceived equally effective by both males and female employees.

**KEYWORDS** : Business process outsourcing, Employee assistance programs, Role of gender, Stress management, Work environment.

### I. Introduction

Stress creeps in, when there is increased anxiety and mental pressure. Though Stress seems to be simple to understand, but it is very complex and generally people misunderstand stress. Stress cannot be defined in a rigid way. According to the most definitions of stress, it is caused by physical or psychological stimulus and the response of individuals to unfavorable conditions. Stress is the process of adaptive response of an individual to face the alarming situations (physical or psychological).

### Definition of Stress

Canadian physician Hans Selye defined stress as a force which can be either physical or psychological in his book '*the stress of life*'.

(Behr; Newman 1978), states 'Stress is a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people.

(Water; Ussery 2007) states that 'stress can be any adverse reaction which people suffer due to excessive pressure..

### Gender Differences

Different studies say different about stress responses and selection of coping skills to heal their stress by different genders. Some results suggest that men and women report different reaction to stress, both physically and mentally because of the different traits of their personalities. But at the same time, studies are also available to support the view of no difference in stress responses by each gender. In fact, there is also a difference in stress for different genders because evidences also disclose that males often develop stress due to their career, whereas females often encounter stress due to issues and interpersonal relationship. Males' self-esteem is habitually built around the perfectness of performance, and female self-esteem is habitually built around perfectness of relationships. Some findings suggest that while women are more likely to report physical symptoms associated with stress, but at the same time, women in their lives have better job connecting with others and, at times, these connections are essential to their stress management approach. To cope with various demands, women often engage in prioritizing and compromising. The overriding factor for men while making decisions and assessing circumstances is, how perfect am I? The process is always the same - stress is asserted when he receives an assignment, he starts assessing his ability to produce a winning outcome, and depending on his answer, he either goes for it or holds back. Conventional stress-management programs lay the accountability of reducing stress on the individual employee rather than on the firm-where it belongs.

### II. Literature

The stress has been defined as a force which can be either Psychological or physical (Selye 1966) [10]. It is a strain applied to the human organism. Various approaches to stress emphasis The transaction between the cognitive and affective aspects of the environment and the individual. The concept of *organizational role stresses* was proposed by (Kahn 1964) [5] which depicts the relation between job assigned and stress level. They describe stress as environmental character which affects people negatively. (Pestonjee 1997) [7] has attempted to present the consequences and nature of the stress phenomenon. The Intra -psychic sector, the social sector and job and the organization are three important sectors of the life in which stress generally originates. (Gianakos 2000; Gianakos 2002) [4] wrote that the workplace stress is affected by the gender. Due to increased number of women in the BPO Industry, some researchers have started to take their research subject on Females to study the field of work stress. Result of survey (BPO Employee – Satisfaction Survey 2010) [2] reveals that all is not well in the BPO sector and Indian BPO employees are suffering from a variety of health related issues as well.

(Bekker et al. 2001) [3] reveals that how the workplace encounter the two genders, the experience to different stimulus and stress stimulus is a decisive factor for the continuation of gender differences. (Melissa 2012) [6] has done a survey to explore the content on expression of emotions at work place by female employees on a diverse group and concluded that women are happier and express less anger than men at workplace. (Sudhashree et al. 2004) [8] described that in the BPO industry, situation is not good. (Sabattini, L) 2006, [9] found that management role in any organization is one of the norm that influence the work stress among employees. Aftab, M & Khatoon, T 2012) [1] illustrated that reduction in the environmental violence; increased job satisfaction and management of moral stress are directly dependent on the variables such as suspension and reflection, education and perfect leadership. In a research Sudhashree, V P, Rohith, K & Shrinivas, K 2004, [8] have revealed by studying responses for 30 years and recognized that in a stressful situations, women respond differently.

### III. Methodology

The study has been conducted on the basis of a sample of 500 respondents being confined only to the BPOs, existing in the NCR region. The data were collected by administering the questionnaire on the responses, of 250 Female respondents and 250 Male respondents.

### IV. Results and Discussion–Employees Survey Questionnaire

This study analyzed demographic factors to have an in-depth

knowledge about respondents'. Therefore respondents' demographic profile has been summarized and discussed accordingly.

**A. Respondents' Job Profile**

Table 1 depicts job profile of respondents which noticeably shows that female are more into customer interaction services (26.1%) and database management (16.9%) whereas, more male percentage (18.7%) are working in administrative jobs and marketing / sales (16.8%) in comparison to female workers. This difference of male and female respondents' percentage might be due to management choice of female worker to please their customers by utilizing their feminine characteristics and soft skills, whereas, male workers are given jobs involving masculine capabilities such as – decision making skills, authority, acceptance of a male leader by others.

**Table 1. Respondents' Job Profile (In Percentage)**

Job Description	Male	Female
Administrative Jobs	18.7	12.3
Marketing / Sales	16.8	9.8
Financial	8.4	13.6
Software / architecture	14.2	10.2
Database Management	11.4	16.9
Training/ Development	15.4	11.1
Customer Interacting Services	15.1	26.1

**B. Respondents' Age Profile**

**Table 2. Respondents' Age Profile (In Percentage)**

Gender		Male (N=250)	Female (N=250)
Age	Below 25 Years	33.6	32.9
	25-35	30.2	40.2
	36-45	15.1	16.2
	Above 45	21.1	10.7

From the Table 2, we can observe that about 32.9 % of female respondents were under 25 years and 33.6 % of male employees are under 25 years of age and 30.2 % of male employees and 40.2% of female employees are of age between 25 – 35 which clearly depicts that there is not any significant difference in the number of youth belonging to each gender. The difference between the age profile of each gender can be easily seen in the age group between 35-45 and above 45 years as shown in Figure 2. This difference of values at later stage can be explained on the basis of argument that as soon as women get married and possess responsibilities of a wife, daughter -in -law, mother, they try for a job change and quit from BPO,s due to lack of work -life balance in this industry.

**C. Distribution of Male and Female, In Hierarchy of BPO Management**

The distribution of women respondents is shown in Table 3 which shows that out of 250 women respondents, there are 30.2 % of female workers at lower levels of management, whereas, only 5.1 % of female are working at a higher level and 40.1% of females are at middle level. Glass ceiling (which is defined as the invisible barrier at the working place) can be clearly seen in the case of female employees in BPOs. As the hierarchy of management increases, there is a decrement in the number of women employees. In our sample, we found only thirteen women who were the part of senior level of management. Analysis of the present data reveals that 12.9% of male employees in comparison to 5.1 % of female are working at senior level, which shows that males are dominating at senior levels of management.

**Table 3. Respondents' Level in Management (In Percentage)**

Gender		Male (N=250)	Female (N=250)
Level in Management	Junior	25.8	30.2
	Middle	48.9	40.1
	Senior Management	12.9	5.1
	Non -Managerial	15.0	24.6

Less number of women employees at a higher level of management might be correlated to some organizational factors, namely - gender biasness, stereotyped work culture, male dominating Indian work environment, issues related to women security. Senior positions in management include rational decision making.

**D. Respondents' Working Shifts**

From the table 4, it can be observed that about 42.0% of the male respondents in comparison to 35.2 % of female employees are working on the shift of (10 pm - 7 am) whereas, 16.2 % of female employees in comparison to 30 % of male employee are working on the shift of (4 pm -1 am). This difference in number of respondents' is due to some factors viz. Women security issue, non availability of safe office transport, overnight work shift, odd timings of these shifts which are major issues that bother a women employee in BPO Industry.

**Table 4. Respondents' Working Shifts**

Gender		Male (N=250)	Female (N=250)
Working Shifts	10pm to 7 am	42.0	35.2
	7 am to 4 pm	28.0	48.6
	4 pm to 1 am	30.0	16.2

**E. Respondents' Annual Income**

From the Table 5, it can be inferred that 30.8 % male and 48.8 % female are earning between 2-5 Lakh in BPO,s which shows that the more employees in BPO are earning an annual income less than 5 Lakh. These respondents are mostly into the jobs involving customer interaction services, customer care services, database handling and the front office assignments. These employees are working in 24 X 7 working environments and manage these repetitive assignments, handle irritating the customer. They work in odd working shift timing to deal with customer with different time zone. These factors make a stressful working environment and are responsible to generate stresses among male and female BPO,s employees.

**Table 5. Respondents' Annual Income**

Gender		Male (N=250)	Female (N=250)
Annual Income	Between 2-5 Lakh	30.8	48.8
	Between 5-10 Lakh	27.2	35.6
	Between 10-15 Lakh	28.0	12.0
	Above 15 Lakh	14.0	3.6

**F. Respondents' Percentage Responses to -What percentage of your time, do you Spend on stress-alleviating techniques?**

From the Table 6, we can observe that 54.1% female respondents' in comparison to 36.2 % spent only 25 percent of their leisure time on stress alleviating techniques, whereas, 27.5 % male in comparison to 12.4 % spend 50 – 75 % on stress alleviating techniques. This analysis show that male spends more time on relaxation methods in comparison to females as female have other household responsibilities along with their office responsibilities.

**Table 6. Respondents' Response on Stress Alleviating Techniques**

Time in Percentage	Male	Female
0 - 25	36.2	54.1
25- 50	20.0	16.3
50-75	27.5	12.4
75-100	11.4	7.2

**G. Respondents' Percentage Responses to - during a quarter, how frequently does your company organize an employee welfare program?**

From the Table 7, we can observe that about 12.5% of female in comparison to 10.5 % male respondents have agreed upon that no

employee assistance programs are being organized in their company and only 27.9 % of male and 29.3 % of female employee responded that their organization organizes such welfare programs less than once in a quarter. Therefore, BPO's management must consider this information important and must plan these welfare programs more frequently in their firms.

**Table 7. Frequency of EAPs**

Frequency	Male	Female
Less Than Once	27.9	29.3
One to Three Times	40.3	39.7
More Than Three Times	19.3	20.5
No Such Programs are being Organized	12.5	10.5

**H. Respondents' Percentage Responses to - How effective are the relaxation Programs/ recreational activities organized by your company for the employees?**

From the Table 8, we can observe that about 50.4% of the male respondents expressed that the relaxation programs/ recreational activities organized by their company for the employees were not very effective. Following bar chart also shows a taller bar corresponding to the same. From the following table, we can observe that about 59.6% of the female respondents expressed that the relaxation programs/ recreational activities organized by their company for the employees were not very effective. Following bar chart also shows a taller bar corresponding to the same.

**Table 8. Respondents' Response on effectiveness of EAPs**

Effectiveness of EAP,s	Male	Female
Ineffective	43.1	46.2
Not Very Effective	37.1	41.3
Effective	19.8	12.5

**V. CONCLUSIONS**

Today *stress* has become a very familiar word which is used by everyone -psychologists, IT professionals, doctors, managers and laymen. The women and men employees in every sector- services, software, paramedical, medical, experience stress in varying degrees on and off the job. In the experience of workplace stress - a demographic characteristics *GENDER* plays an important role. Earlier studies did not reveal much about the role of gender in the stress responses but analysis of the present paper has revealed results which are similar to some recent research on human recourses which are focused on gender differences in the stress outcomes and found that there are different demographic parameters responsible for the generation of stress among males and the females. Though, to explore this topic more, deeper investigation is still required at a broad level. Thus the results of this study have shown heterogeneity in stress factors for each gender. For the heterogeneity in stresses, their demographic factors and societal norms are also responsible. On the basis of the present study, it can be revealed that differences in demographic among each gender is significant. For the heterogeneity in demographic parameters, their biological differences are also responsible. As women give more emotion-based reaction, whereas men faces stress logically. Therefore, *if organizations are spending huge amount on such programs, its usefulness must be ensured in terms of benefits to both the genders.* In today's cutthroat working environment, management needs to go for output based employee welfare programs to optimized the employees' stress level and it ought to comprise gender based policies.

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