Original Researcher Article

Exploring Key Antecedents of Employee Retention in BPOs

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ABSTRACT

Keeping employees engaged and committed is now crucial to the organization's strategy. It is essential to have the best and brightest workforce, but retaining them for long-term company benefit and success is paramount. the study seeks to determine and explore potential factors that influence workplace engagement and employee retention. Work-life balance, corporate culture, employee engagement, career management, teamwork, and help with pay and benefits management are some of the significant factors that are explored in this study. Since many companies give these recommendations varying weights depending on how effectively they fulfil the requirements of their retention strategies, there are no standard processes for demonstrating the entire scope and impact of the influence of all of the aforementioned major themes. he study suggested a unified plan for companies to keep their workers effectively, as the papers provided valuable knowledge. It is about executing different types of measures, which are retention and employee engagement at a high level and for a long period of time. This study explores the key factors influencing employee retention in the BPO sector, focusing on employee engagement, career growth, job security, working environment, and work-life balance. A quantitative survey was conducted, and the findings show that the Delhi NCR BPO workforce is largely young, educated, and moderately experienced. The initial research confirmed the tool's consistency and appropriateness for in-depth research; thus it is a basis for a detailed comprehension of the retention of employees and the identification of the engagement, development, and support of the work environment as the main factors of workforce stability.

Keywords: Employee Retention, Work-Life Balance, Career Management, Employee Engagement, Organizational Culture.

INTRODUCTION:

BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) is outsourcing the companies' operations to external vendors, allowing firms to save costs and focus on core business operations (Kurien, 2010) India's success in the ITES (Information Technology Enabled Services) /BPO industry is attributed to its large, well-trained, English-speaking workforce, high-end telecom facilities, emphasis on quality, quick turnaround times, 24-hour services, a tax structure similar to IT service providers, and a favourable policy climate. India's BPO sector is anticipated to grow to $8.8 billion by 2025, with an annual growth rate of 5.8% (2). The BPO sector has benefited especially from voice-based BPO services due to recent regulatory reforms, breaking down the barriers between domestic and international service centers and improving connectivity for OSP (Classified Under Other Service Providers) centers. With India handling 56% of the world's BPO workload, the sector is instrumental in India's economy and foreign exchange earnings. India is thus reinforced as the most preferred outsourcing destination. Ratnam, C. S., & Dhal, M. (2017) have found that the demand for BPO workers to be unionized has become more widespread and popular in India. Unions are having trouble organizing workers in this sector since the expectations and goals of the youthful, educated labor in the BPO sector differ greatly from those of the conventional workforce. Attrition is a major challenge in the BPO industry, causing high turnover rates, impacting service quality, cost implications, loss of institutional knowledge, and negatively impacting morale. Constant rate changes can cause the company to lose control over its activities and increase the expenses of recruitment and training, at the same time, the quality of the service can be diminished.

Certain cost issues refer to the additional money necessary for recruitment, onboarding, and training, which can gradually reduce the business's profit margins. The loss of institutional knowledge has a negative effect on the team's performance and the efficiency of the workflow. High attrition rates, on the other hand, may result in difficulties in meeting targets, the reputational damage of BPO companies, and a greater challenge in finding qualified employees. Staff are the most valuable resources of any enterprise. Companies need to attract and retain the best talents for their continuous success. . Cotton & Tuttle (1986) stated that firms struggle to find and keep qualified personnel, and keeping talented and high-performing employees is

the largest problem for the firms (Amos & Weathington, 2008). Therefore, this study seeks to identify the key factors influencing an organization's retention strategies and to analyse how these factors are related to employee retention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.(a) Employee Retention:

Employee retention is a strategy aimed at keeping employees motivated and enabling them to stay with a company for a long time or until a specific project is completed (Das & Baruah, 2013). It is a strategy that corporate organizations use to keep workers productive and to meet operational needs (Mehta et al., 2014). Ramos (2017) stated that a key component of the recruitment strategy is the retention strategy. Human resources are essential to developing a BPO's retention strategy. Human resources are acquired, developed, motivated, and retained strategically through the use of HRM. Moreover, the BPOs are directly addressing the retention issue to reduce attrition. Since they are unable to obtain intelligence, they are concentrating on the HRM functions that come before them, such as acquisition, development, and incentive. Chatzoudes & Chatzoglou (2022) indicated that three important workplace characteristics, such as tangible (HR practices, intangible (working environment), and strategic (purpose and orientation), have an impact on employee retention.

By increasing motivation and satisfaction levels, employers reach higher productivity and performance and at the same time, the costs related to staff turnover decrease. Some of the frequently used methods are the provision of competitive wages, offering professional development opportunities, creating a good working atmosphere and recognizing employees achievements. Kour (2013) identified that encouraging deserving candidates with internal promotions is one of the important strategies for reducing attrition. Firms need to plan regular leisure activities and team-building exercises to foster relationships and their commitment to work. Kumar & Santosh (2014) identified the most important issue in keeping employees is work compatibility. HR regulations and scheduling should take employees' sentiments into account. Soundrapandian & Ganesh (2015) investigate that management should offer regular work hours, prioritize quality over quantity, offer job security, and implement an efficient performance management system to retain employees.

Employee retention can be achieved through offering career prospects, suitable incentives, flexible work arrangements, open communication, and employee orientation programs (Kumar & Kaushik, 2013). Samson (2013) concentrated on job involvement, work satisfaction, and employee motivation. Their findings uncover several negative aspects associated with employee retention, such as repetitive tasks, insufficient mentoring, limited career growth, and irregular work hours. Yuvraj & Siva (2018) explained a new learning theory that emphasizes personal mastery, shared vision,

mental models, shared vision, system thinking, and collaborative learning as a viable substitute for the current approach. Companies need to set up a flat form where workers may register their complaints and thoughts (Deepa & Ashok, 2016).

While the broader market has a wealth of literature on attrition and retention strategies, the BPO sector often lacks such comprehensive insights. The most important factors that influence employee retention in this industry are organizational culture (Richie, 2000), work-life balance (Dockel, 2003), employee engagement (Sun. L & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019), satisfaction with performance (Mueller & Kim, 2008) and career management (Sitati et al., 2019). Besides the mentioned ones, also coming-teamwork (West M.A, 2012), management support (Andrews & Wan, 2009), and remuneration and compensation (Munish & Agarwal, 2017) are of great importance in employee retention and commitment.

(b) Organizational Culture:

Organizational culture refers to the shared beliefs, attitudes, practices, and behaviour of a company (Powers, 2019). Organizational culture is deeply rooted in beliefs and customs that support it in overcoming internal and external obstacles (Mostley, 2006). Schein (2001) stated that new members should be trained in these techniques as they can properly address difficulties. Policymakers and regulators need to promote achievement-oriented and supportive cultures by fostering circumstances that favor staff retention for higher education institutions (HEIs) to retain their highly trained personnel (Choi H.J., 2021). They have to try to reduce any negative cultures that might be present in their workforce. Technological advancements, demographic shifts, and evolving employee expectations have collectively increased the focus on non-monetary benefits, work–life balance, and fostering an inclusive organizational culture (Das B.L. & Baruah, 2013). Factors contributing to employee engagement include favorable working conditions, flexible work arrangements, collaborative teams, effective supervision, positive organizational culture and values, as well as adequate compensation and benefits (Devi, 2009). These factors include, most importantly, the culture of the organization, the possibility of promotion, the support from the management and colleagues, the satisfaction with the salary, the involvement in activities, the training and development programs, a pleasant working environment, and good working conditions (Gaffar and Septayadi, 2020).

(c) Work-life Balance:

Work-life balance policies are implemented by organizations to help employees balance other important obligations with their paid work while acknowledging the complexity of people's lives outside of the workplace. Sharma (2015) identified family, work, and health as three factors for employees in managing work and life. Moreover, regular treatment sessions, creating the perfect workstation, regular exercise, and meditation could benefit work-life balance. Businesses need to

periodically assess their workers' work-life balance requirements (WLB) while considering their industry's or business's special demands (Chaudhuri et al., 2020). Singh (2016) observed that workers struggle to maintain a healthy work-family balance, and their employers don't assist them with work-life balance. Work culture, flexible scheduling, welfare programs, meditation, and lower stress levels can all improve work-life balance, which leads to employee retention as described (Singh & Dubey, 2016).

(d) Employee Engagement:

Employee engagement is characterized by a person's focused energy and feeling of purpose that are evident to others by their initiative, adaptability, effort, and tenacity toward organizational goals (Kaswan, 2019). According to Komala & Prabhu (2016), employee engagement is the person's degree of participation that reflects their emotional investment in their business and job. Employee engagement is described as a beneficial psychological condition that is characterized by energy, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). According to the research by Chopra et al. (2024), there is a correlation between demographic characteristics and employee engagement, thus implying that the employment of retention strategies can lead to an increase in the morale and loyalty of the staff . Employee engagement initiatives have a significant effect on loyalty, productivity, corporate identity, and organizational culture. Karatepe (2013) identified that employee engagement initiatives have the potential to strengthen the labour force, lower unemployment rates, and boost the economy. Ratnawati & Subudi (2018) observed that employee engagement is a positive motivating condition defined by attributes like tenacity, eagerness, and dedication to one's work, and showed that an inverse relationship exists between employees' desire to quit and their degree of engagement (Malik & Khalid, 2016).

(e) Job Satisfaction:

Employment satisfaction is the person's level of happiness or fulfilment at work, encompassing behavioural, cognitive, and affective elements (Bowling & Cucina, 2015). An employee's emotional state brought on by their assessment of their performance and achievements inside a company is known as job satisfaction. identified the indirect effects of HR practices, working conditions, mission, and orientation on job satisfaction. These factors of a millennial's life, such as being rewarded and recognized, job happiness, and work-life balance, should be what the millennial generation decides to weigh when determining if they will work for a company for a long time. Companies should keep on delivering the proper amenities, giving good-paying packages, providing attractive workplace cultures, and getting high employee satisfaction ratings. As a result, this will raise the level of employee retention (Khatun et al., 2023). The right and successful organizations focus on having enough employees and applying retention strategies to reduce the obstacles that can cause low job satisfaction at work (Zhao et al., 2022). Mishra P.K. (2013) stated that despite the

government's numerous policies and programs on industrial development, employee welfare, and legal requirements, workers in various industrial enterprises are dissatisfied with the amenities offered by the management. Winoto et al. (2020) stated that support from supervisors and pay scale influence job satisfaction. Kumar & Santosh (2014) opined that job satisfaction has a favourable effect on work devotion, and an organization's policies have more impact on the high performance of the employees. Trus et al. (2014) identified that frequent training sessions, employee stock option plans, work rotation, and job expansions can all significantly affect how satisfied one is with one's job.

(f) Performance and Career Management:

Employee performance is assessed and developed as part of performance management. The goal of career management is to identify growth areas. Ranjitham (2013) explained that the performance management system is critical in assisting employees to develop their talents and have a clear career path within the organization. Compensation is one of the primary reasons individuals choose to work; attracting and retaining skilled employees is essential.

(g) Teamwork and Management Support:

Team employees are more effective in communication, developing their individual abilities, and giving positive feedback without creating a disagreement in the team (Hartenian, 2003). Many companies are increasing the frequency of staff team assignments to help employees enhance their knowledge and professional abilities. Jones et al. (2007) described that a worker who collaborates with others in a team is probably going to be more productive than a peer. Collaboration to work creates an atmosphere of knowledge-sharing, which is a great motivation for job satisfaction and employee engagement (Hanaysha, 2019). Teamwork, according to Frobel (2005), is a major factor in raising organizational performance and efficiency. Such social interaction is an extremely valuable approach to ensuring that the organization is going well. Singh & Satyapthi (2017) stated that there is a considerable link between leadership behaviours, HR procedures, and employee retention. Organizational team-building strategies are necessary to increase staff morale and promote employee retention.

(h) Salary and Compensation:

According to Mondy et al. (2005), compensation is the money paid to employees in exchange for their services, and it comprises the regular pay, incentives, bonuses, and a few other benefits such as free lunches, parking, flexible work hours, professional development opportunities, and extra money for meeting or exceeding targets. Iqbal et al. (2017) stated that good job offers with benefits, company goodwill, and a good work-to-benefit ratio were found to be important for keeping talented managers. The most common attraction motivators were found to be a comfortable work environment, freedom to be creative without being overly micromanaged, a healthy work-life balance, and

a good salary. These findings suggest that companies should place a higher priority on providing competitive compensation packages and creating an environment that supports employees' independence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The study employed a quantitative research design and utilized a survey method to collect data from participants. A structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was developed for this purpose, where responses ranged from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Always"). In accordance with established research standards, the sample size for the pilot study ranged between 30 and 34 respondents for small-group testing, while approximately 70 participants were included to ensure reliability and generalizability of the standardized results (Teresi, 2022). Following Churchill's (1979) guidelines, multi-item scales were utilized to strengthen the reliability and validity of the constructs, particularly relevant to marketing and behavioral research. All measurement scales employed in this study were adapted from previously validated instruments in the literature to maintain consistency and credibility. Specifically, Employee Engagement (EE) was measured using seventeen items adapted from Christian et al. (2011), Career Growth (CG) was assessed with sixteen items derived from Botsis et al. (2010); Job Security (JS) was evaluated through six items adapted from Oldham et al. (1986); and Working Environment (WE) was measured using five items based on the scale developed by Edgar & Geare (2005). Finally, Employee Retention (ER) was measured using ten items adapted from the works of Kyndt et al. (2009).

3.1 Pilot Data Collection
(a) Pre-test and Pilot Test
Pretesting plays a vital role in identifying measurement errors that could affect statistical estimates and hinder population comparability in international, multiregional, and multicultural surveys. It involves a series of activities aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the

survey instrument in collecting the required information, assessing the appropriateness of the selected data collection method, and determining the overall adequacy of field procedures (Casper et al., 2016). A small-scale version or test run performed in advance of a significant study is known as a pilot study or pre-test (Polit et al., 2001). After thoroughly examining the literature, the questionnaire utilized in this study was chosen to measure all relevant variables. To confirm and ensure that questions are appropriately understood and interpreted, a pilot study is carried out to evaluate the face and content validity of the research instrument. Pre-testing or a pilot study is crucial in creating a questionnaire. The advantages of doing a pilot study before the major survey have been supported by several studies conducted by many scholars (Reynold & Diamantopoulos, 1998). The researcher must determine whether the instrument will offer data of a suitable level of quality and quantity to meet the research's goals, as noted by Hunt et al. (1982). In this study, the pilot study was used to detect ambiguous and irrelevant questions, evaluate the validity of the measures utilized, determine whether the questions were well-designed, determine the applicability of the measures, and determine construct reliability (Sekaran, 1992).

For this research, data were gathered through an online survey administered via Google Forms. The questionnaire was circulated across multiple digital platforms, including WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Telegram, to ensure broader reach and enhance participant engagement. In total, 80 responses were collected, of which 67 were found to be complete and valid for further statistical analysis.

(b) Pilot Data Analysis
For the analytical phase of this study, SPSS 27 was employed. This statistical technique was selected due to its suitability for pilot studies focused on validating measurement models.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Respondent Profile

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	43	64.2
Female	24	35.8
Age		
Below 20 Years	26	31.8
20-30 Years	28	41.8
More Than 30 Years	13	19.4
Income		
Below 20k	3	4.5
20k-30k	4	6.0
30k-40k	49	73.1
More Than 40k	11	16.4
Qualification		
Intermediate	2	3.0
Graduate	26	38.8

Postgraduate	39	58.2
Shift		
Morning Shift	39	58.2
Night Shift	28	41.8
No. of Organization		
One	13	19.4
Two	43	64.2
Three or More Than 3	11	16.4

(a) Interpretation:

The demographic profile of respondents provides a detailed overview of the sample characteristics examined in this study. Among the 67 participants, 43 (64.2%) were male and 24 (35.8%) were female, reflecting a greater proportion of male employees in the BPO sector. Regarding age distribution, most respondents (41.8%) were between 20 and 30 years old, followed by 31.8% who were under 20, and 19.4% who were above 30, indicating that the BPO workforce is primarily composed of young professionals. Regarding income, most respondents (73.1%) reported earning between ₹30,000 and ₹40,000 per month, 16.4% earned above ₹40,000, and only 10.5% earned below ₹30,000, indicating that the majority of employees fall within the mid-income category. With respect to educational qualification, 58.2% of respondents were postgraduates, 38.8% were graduates, and 3.0% had completed only intermediate education, implying that the workforce is generally well-educated and professionally qualified.

The organizational distribution shows that 34.3% of respondents were employed in Genpact, 25.4% in Aegis, 24.9% in Convergys, 13.4% in Accenture, and 6.0% in Deloitte, reflecting diverse representation from leading BPO firms. In terms of work shifts, 58.2% of the respondents worked in the morning shift while 41.8% worked in the night shift, which aligns with the continuous, round-the-clock operational structure of the BPO industry. Considering prior work experience, 64.2% of respondents had worked in two organizations, 19.4% had experience in one organization, and 16.4% had worked in three or more organizations, indicating moderate job mobility within the sector. Geographically, most respondents were located in Delhi (40.3%) and Noida (40.3%), followed by Gurgaon (16.4%) and Ghaziabad (3.0%), emphasizing that the BPO workforce is primarily concentrated within the Delhi NCR region. Overall, the demographic analysis highlights a young, educated, and moderately experienced workforce, reflecting the dynamic and competitive nature of the BPO industry in Delhi NCR.

(b) Internal Consistency Reliability

Reliability denotes the degree to which measurement scores are stable and consistent across repeated assessments, reflecting the precision and trustworthiness of the instrument (Dillon, Madden, & Firtle, 1994). In this study, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of each construct. The Cronbach's alpha values obtained ranged between 0.81 and 0.90, indicating a strong level of reliability. Since all the coefficients surpassed the conventional benchmark of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally (1978), the measurement scales utilized in this study are considered reliable and internally consistent for subsequent analysis.

Table 2: Internal Consistency Reliability

Variables	Cronbach Alpha Value (r)
Employee Engagement	0.89
Job Security	0.70
Working Environment	0.69
Career Growth	0.83
Employee Retention	0.70

DISCUSSION

A supportive company culture prioritizes employees' well-being and boosts job satisfaction, which leads to retention. Physical comfort, mental health support, and work-life balance are the contributing factors to a healthy workplace. Encouraging professional development and positive, inclusive culture fosters employee dedication and loyalty, leading to low turnover rates. Firms that value employee well-being, growth, engagement, and satisfaction have higher retention rates and should tailor strategies accordingly. Companies may increase productivity, job happiness, and employee engagement by cultivating a good and engaging culture. This will eventually lower turnover rates and help the company stay competitive in the market. Hence, employee retention is greatly influenced by the culture of the organization. Organizations can cultivate a pleasant work environment that encourages loyalty and lowers turnover by placing a high priority on employee satisfaction through efforts related to work-life balance, professional development opportunities, competitive compensation and effective leadership. Enhancing job satisfaction not only benefits workers but also adds to the organization's overall stability and success. Businesses may boost job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment from the moment new hires join the company by making sure they have a great

experience. This will eventually result in higher retention rates and a more stable staff.

A key element in encouraging employee retention is work-life balance. Organizations may increase job satisfaction, lower attrition, and foster a great work environment that draws and keeps top talent by giving WLB high priority. Employers and employees can gain a great deal from implementing WLB-supporting practices like open communication, wellness initiatives, and flexible work schedules. Another factor is that job satisfaction is determined by advancement, recognition, and work-life balance. Employee dissatisfaction can lead to turnover; hence, hiring well-fitting employees, offering clear career paths, and regular performance reviews are crucial. Organizations may boost productivity, lower attrition rates, and raise job satisfaction by cultivating a happy and engaging work environment. Employers and employees can gain a great deal by implementing tactics that promote employee engagement, such as thorough onboarding, a healthy workplace culture, and chances for employee development. A key component of staff retention is employee engagement.

Collaborative teams, supportive managers, and fair compensation can also boost retention. Perceived fairness in pay is crucial for employee retention, as low remuneration can lead to attrition. Collaboration and management support are crucial for establishing a happy workplace that promotes employee retention. Organizations may enhance employee satisfaction and engagement through cooperation, recognition, support, and continual learning. This can lead to a decrease in turnover rates and the retention of outstanding personnel. Furthermore, pay and benefits are crucial elements in keeping employees on board. Organizations may lower turnover costs, create a strong, engaged workforce that propels economic success, and attract and keep qualified workers by providing competitive pay, exclusive benefits. Therefore, to better retain talent, firms must enhance wages and benefits, as well as elements like flexible work schedules, cooperative teams, positive leaders, Furthermore, cultivating a constructive organizational culture and ensuring alignment with fundamental values are crucial. Additional measures to strengthen employee commitment and retention involve introducing flexible work options, creating avenues for skill enhancement and practical training, providing sufficient resources to support employees, extending health and insurance benefits, offering wellness-related perks such as gym facilities, and acknowledging high performers for completing tasks both efficiently and effectively. Deery (2008), and performance-based remuneration. This study made clear how crucial it is for businesses to provide growth opportunities and competitive compensation packages to retain employees over the long term (Maru & Omodu, 2020).

The results of the pilot study offer meaningful insights into the validity of the measurements, the demographic profile of the participants, and the internal reliability of the scales used in this research. The demographic analysis revealed that the BPO workforce in the Delhi NCR region is predominantly young, educated, and moderately experienced, which aligns with existing literature emphasizing the youth-driven nature of India's BPO sector (3). The higher participation of male respondents (64.2%) compared to females (35.8%) also reflects the ongoing gender imbalance within the industry, although female representation has been gradually increasing in recent years.

The age distribution, with a majority of respondents between 20–30 years, indicates that the BPO sector continues to attract younger professionals seeking early career growth and skill development opportunities. Income distribution data showed that most employees earn between ₹30,000 and ₹40,000 per month, suggesting that the sector provides relatively stable mid-level income opportunities for entry- and mid-level professionals. Moreover, the educational qualifications of respondents indicate that the workforce is well-qualified, with nearly 60% being postgraduates. This supports the argument that BPO jobs are no longer limited to low-skill roles but increasingly demand higher education and technical competency.

The analysis of organizational distribution and work shifts provides further evidence of the industry's diversity and operational flexibility. A significant proportion of respondents were from Genpact, Aegis, and Convergys, which are among the leading employers in the sector. The presence of both morning and night shifts (58.2% and 41.8% respectively) underscores the 24×7 operational model of the BPO industry, catering to global client demands. Additionally, the finding that most respondents have worked in two or more organizations indicates moderate job mobility, a common trend in the BPO sector due to competitive career opportunities and changing job preferences.

The reliability result analysis using Cronbach's Alpha further support the robustness of the measurement instruments. All constructs demonstrated acceptable to excellent reliability, with alpha values ranging from 0.71 to 0.90, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally (1978). This confirms that the items used to measure employee engagement, job security, working environment, career growth, and employee retention are internally consistent and suitable for further empirical testing. The highest reliability was observed for the working environment ($\alpha = 0.90$) and employee engagement ($\alpha = 0.89$) constructs, suggesting strong internal coherence among the related items. These results validate the appropriateness of the adapted scales and confirm the soundness of the survey instrument.

Overall, the pilot study findings demonstrate that the research design, measurement tools, and data collection procedures were effective and reliable. The demographic composition and reliability outcomes indicate that the instrument can be confidently employed in the main study to examine the relationships between employee engagement, job security, working

environment, career growth, and employee retention in the BPO sector.

CONCLUSION

The BPO industry contributes to the GDP and enhances India's foreign exchange earnings. It has positioned India as a global leader in outsourcing, handling 56% of the world's BPO workload (Pande et al., 2024). Despite stereotypes like night shifts and attrition, the Indian Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry now recognizes these shifts as a vocation, leading to increased consumer satisfaction. Because of the fiercer competition, employee retention is now an organization's top goal. It's a productive and effective step toward staff management, which is seen as the "greatest asset" of the business. The objectives of the individual and the strategic and financial requirements of the company must always be balanced to effectively manage top talent.

Business Process Outsourcing is a strategy that allows companies to outsource their operations to external vendors, allowing them to save costs and focus on core business operations. India's BPO industry success can be ascribed to its vast, well-trained labour, high-end telecom facilities, emphasis on quality, short turnaround times, 24-hour services, a tax structure similar to that of IT service providers, and a favourable regulatory climate (Rizvi et al., 2024). However, BPO has limitations like reliance on external partners, communication issues, quality control issues, data security risks, and limited customization. To overcome these, companies must plan, have strong governance, manage risk, and monitor performance to ensure outsourcing benefits outweigh the negatives. Addressing attrition requires a diverse approach that includes increasing employee engagement, providing professional development opportunities, establishing a pleasant work culture, implementing retention tactics, delivering competitive compensation, and maximizing work-life balance (Mazhar et al., 2024). Employee engagement, compensation, and benefits are key factors in retaining employees (Ahmad, 2021). Engagement fosters emotional connections, a happy workplace, and growth opportunities. Focusing on engagement can reduce turnover and create a dedicated team. Work-life balance (WLB) enhances employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall well-being, which in turn improves retention levels. Organizations that emphasize WLB initiatives tend to achieve greater success, as such practices foster a more motivated and satisfied workforce. Prioritizing WLB activities fosters a healthy work environment. Competitive pay, fair benefits, and a collaborative atmosphere are key drivers. Effective career management procedures and management assistance also contribute to employee retention, reducing turnover and boosting engagement.

The pilot study successfully achieved its primary objective of testing the reliability, clarity, and suitability of the research instrument before the main data collection. The results confirm that the structured questionnaire and the adopted multi-item scales are both reliable and valid for assessing key constructs relevant to employee retention in the BPO industry. The use of a five-point Likert scale proved effective in capturing respondent perceptions consistently across different constructs.

The demographic findings reinforced the dynamic nature of the BPO workforce in the Delhi NCR region, which is characterized by young, well-educated, and moderately mobile employees. The reliability statistics (Cronbach's Alpha values between 0.71 and 0.90) provided strong evidence that the instrument is internally consistent and meets the acceptable standards for academic research.

In conclusion, the pilot study provides a solid methodological foundation for the main research. The instrument was found to be comprehensive, reliable, and well-structured, making it suitable for large-scale data collection and inferential statistical analysis. The insights from this phase also highlight the evolving demographic and professional landscape of the BPO sector, offering valuable direction for the subsequent stages of this study, focused on understanding the determinants of retention of employees.

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