

Call Centre Employees: Physical Environment and Role boundary a source of Occupational Stress

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ABSTRACT

This paper address the challenges faced by call centre employees engage in domestic and international call centre. The reviews based on empirical research on physical environment and role boundary as a greatest source of occupational stress. However objectives of this study are to see the difference and effect on gender and call centre on the variables of occupational stress *i.e.* physical environment and role boundary. Data collected from domestic and international call centre of Delhi/NCR by the means of occupational stress inventory developed by Ospewi. Whereas the factorial design applied and statistically (mean and ANOVA) are used to drown the measurement with the sample of 200 employees belongs to domestic and international call centre for this study while the result detailed through figure and tabulation and discussion explore through the lenses of previous studies as well include the practical evidences bring from the present study.

Key Words : Call centre, Physical environment, Role boundary, Employees, Gender

INTRODUCTION

Call centers in India is been recognize by its tremendous job as 24/7, with targeting international clients, the percentage of international call centre's are as high as compare to other Asian countries globally. Call center is been broadly premeditated by various name such as sweatshop, cyber coolies etc. It's frequently calculated with occupational stress and burnout, also correlated with performance, job satisfaction including the challenges in work as well as the life pattern. This paper meant to study the physical environment and role boundary as a predictor of occupational stress in call centre.

Physical environment:

Physical environment has the leveraged to improve the employee well-being, it reflected in modern work place by technology, computer machines and by general furniture and furnishings (Statt, 1994). To achieve high levels of employee commitment, organizations must

ensure that the physical environment is conducive to organizational needs facilitating interaction and privacy, formality and informality, functionality and cross disciplinarily. Consequently, the physical environment is a tool that can be leverage both to improve business results (Mohr, 1996) and employee well-being (Huang *et al.*, 2004). However the definition coded long back but the meaning of physical environment is revolving around which could be considered as transport of unconstructiveness by several means.

Anthropologist and environment psychologist have shown that man's spatial behavior is observable and predictable and that changes in physical environment or the way it is perceived are accompanied by concomitant changes in behavior (Henrietta Pecyna, 2009).

Role boundary:

Boundaries are the defining characteristics of organization as the way in which boundaries are managed effects how organization works. Boundaries separate a

system from its environment and delineate the parts and process within the system. Mulholland (2002) maintains that managerial control has been extended with the integration of telephones and computers, limiting agent discretion and control over their work. Lack of participation in the decision making process, lack of effective consultation and communication, unjustified restrictions on behavior, office politics and no sense of belonging are identified as potential sources which specify the boundary and cause of stressors. As stated by Umiker (1992) that individuals who feel that they are in control of their jobs and their futures are better able to handle stress. Also that these empowered workers become more productive out of being in control. Majority of the respondents opine that lack of promotion opportunities is an important stressor. There is a less chance of growth and development in the call centre sector. Also when some of them tried to switch over to some other job, the experience in call center was not considered. These are similar to the findings that there is little career progression in call centers. Another important fact is that everyone who joins the call center does not end up becoming a team leader or moving into the top management roles (Pallavi, 2007).

Review of literature:

Studies conducted on the area of occupational stress in the Indian scenario to understand the organization behavior mostly occupy the employee and employer relation and impact where as occupational stress and particularly physical environment and role boundary related to call centre merely present in few articles. On the other hand the studies on physical environment in globally could be seen through Sutherland and Cooper (1991) who states that how physical environment through technology as well furniture and furnishing bombard our brains and sensory information. Evans and Johnson (2000) elaborate how noise disturbs in speech comprehension that leads to tiredness and stress. Whereas remarking statement by Cherniak in 1999 sketch the increasing amount of computer work is a concrete example of modern change in working life that has affected the physical work environment. As added further by Smith and Bayehi in 2003 that considerable work has been done to improve the physical design of workplaces. Computer workstation design improvements can prevent awkward postures and increase worker health and performance. Several studies have pointed out that people in open office

landscapes feel disturbed by each other (Evans and Johnson, 2000). Importance of design of the working environment and equipment is important for the productivity and quality of the computer-produced work (Jensen *et al.*, 2001). An organization's physical environment and its design and layout can affect employee behavior in the workplace. Brill (1992) estimates that improvements in the physical design of the workplace may result in a 5-10 percent increase in employee productivity. Stallworth and Kleiner (1996) however argue that increasingly an organization's physical layout is designed around employee needs in order to maximize productivity and satisfaction.

Studies to formulate the review of literature in role boundary as a source of occupational stress become a lackluster assignment for this particular study by Sunanda (2018) in his article "influence of occupational role stressors on employees stress in IT" as stated that role boundary are the highest source of occupational stress.

METHODOLOGY

Objective:

- To examine the physical environment and role boundary of occupational stress among domestic and international of male and female call centers employees.
- To study the effect of physical environment and role boundary of occupational stress among domestic and international of male and female call centers employees.
- To study the interactional effect of call center employees and gender.

Hypothesis:

- There would be significant difference between domestic and international call center employees and gender on physical environment and role boundary of occupational stress.
- There would be significant effect on gender difference on domestic and international call centre employees in both the variables *i.e.* physical environment and role boundary of occupational stress.
- There would be significant interactional effect of call centre and gender on physical environment and role boundary of occupational stress.

Participation:

Design: 2 X 2 factorial design is been computed for this paper includes 200 participation from domestic and international call centre from Delhi /NCR.

Variables:

Independent variable:

Call centre and Gender .

Dependent variable:

Physical environment and Role Boundary.

Measures:

Occupational stress inventory:

Revised Edition (OSI-R) develops by Osipow (1998) consists measure of three dimensions of occupational adjustment: occupational stress, psychological strain and coping resources. However the physical environment and role boundary question are extensively focused in this paper.

Procedure- data collection:

Primary:

Questionnaire-structured questionnaire circulated to subject and collected

Secondary:

Review of literature in the shape of website and journals trough the means of internet, hard copy and an

archival records

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Main effect:

The main effect of physical environment on call centre was found no significant ($F=.000, p=.991$) means that the call centre has no significant impact on physical environment in the occupational stress of the subjects. And the mean of mean on domestic call centre were 62.74 revealed subtle differences than the international call centre employees means of mean *i.e.* 62.73

The main effect of gender on physical environment was found no significant difference ($F=2.289, p=.132$) implies that gender does not influences physical environment in occupational stress of the participants. While the mean difference of male employees was 63.42 which are greater than the female employees mean difference 62.05 of call centre.

Interactional effect:

The interactional effect of call centre and gender was found to be significant ($F=9.631, p=.002$). Hence it can be said that the call centre and gender together does influence the physical environment of the subject in

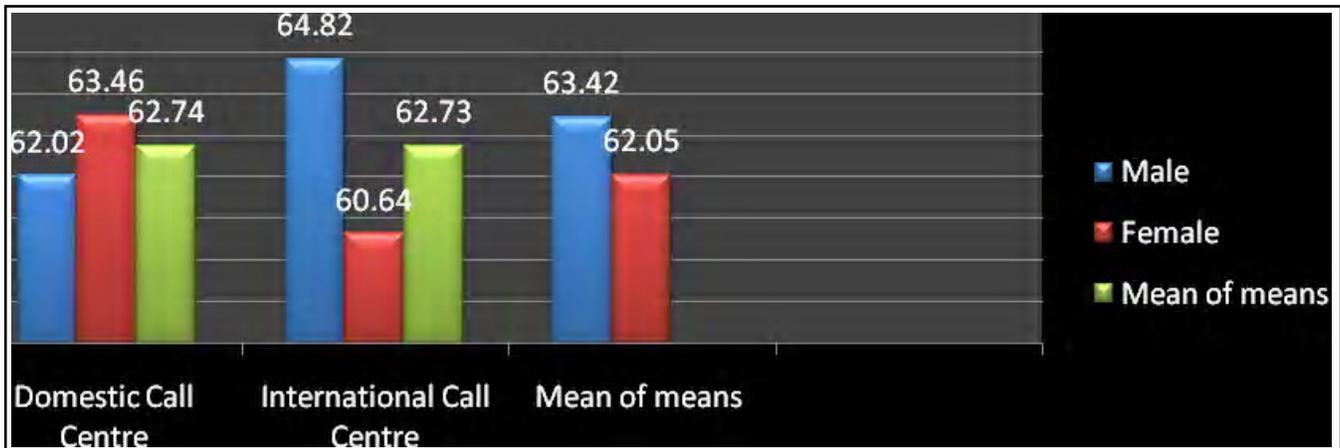


Fig. 1 : Mean of means of different groups on Physical Environment in occupational stress score

Table 1 : ANOVA summary of Physical Environment in occupational stress

Sources of variables	Sum of square	df	Mean sum of squares	F	Sig.
Call centre	.005	1	.005	.000	.991
Gender	93.845	1	93.845	2.289	.132
Call centre* gender	394.805	1	394.805	9.631	.002
Error	8034.300	196	40.991		
Total	795659.000	200			

occupational stress.

Main effect:

The main effect of call centre significantly differ ($F=11.11, p=.001$). It means that call centre has significant impact on role boundary in occupational stress of the subjects. Mean of means of different groups of role boundary are 53.99 of domestic call centre and 58.6 of international call centre reflecting greater the mean of domestic call centre employees.

The main effect of gender was significant ($F=4.102, p=.047$). This implies that gender does influences role boundary in occupational stress of participants. While the mean of means of male are 57.68 and of female are 54.91 which more than male employees of call centre.

Interactional effect:

The interactional effect of call centre and gender was found to be significant ($F=9.712, p=.002$). Hence, it can be said that call centre and gender together does

influence the role boundary in occupational stress of the subjects.

Discussion and Conclusion

The ANOVA summary of (Table 1) physical environment of occupational stress and mean scores (Fig. 1) verify that physical environment of occupational stress partially influence the call centre, as study by Nenonen (2004) maintains that the physical environment can support a sense of space allowing for the creation of tacit knowledge and greater social interaction amongst individuals. Similarly added by Ilozor *et al.* (2002) that the innovative working environment is also associated with increased staff collaboration and higher productivity as well as more positive job attitudes and increased job satisfaction (Lee, 2006; Lee and Brand, 2005). It is important that furniture and equipment can be adjusted to each individual, and also that the operator has the appropriate knowledge about how to adjust and use the equipment in an optimal way. An organization’s physical

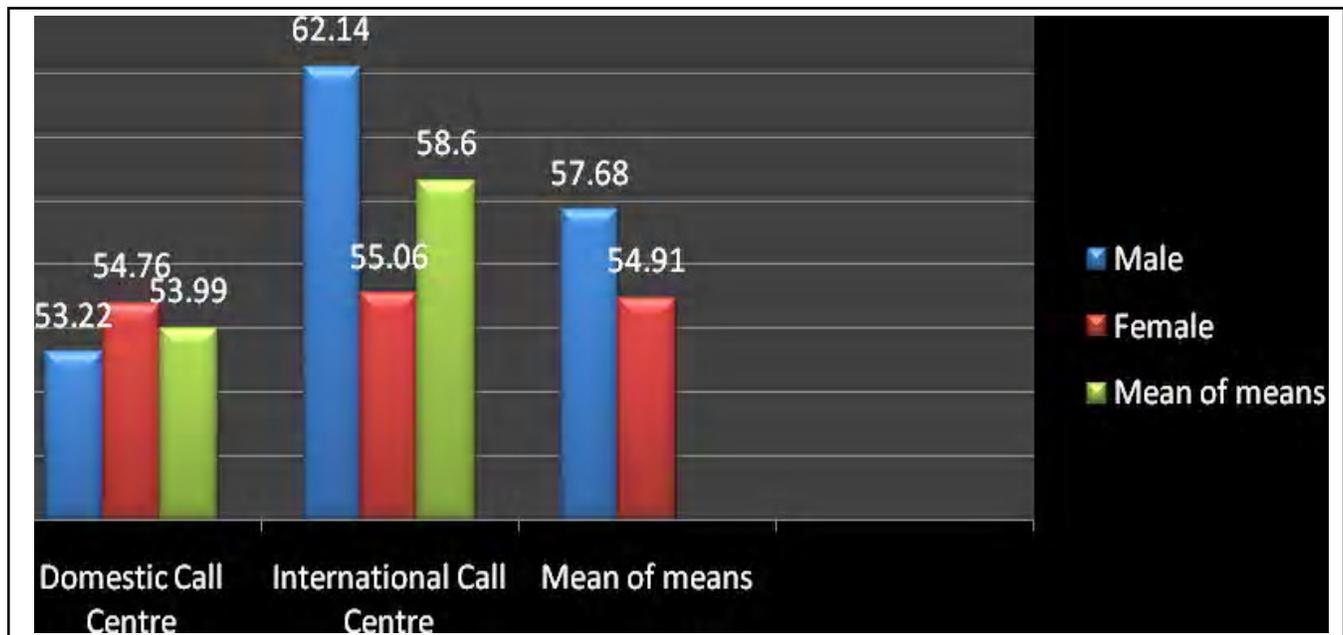


Fig. 2 : Mean of means of different groups on Role Boundary in occupational stress score

Sources of variables	Sum of square	df	Mean sum of squares	F	Sig.
Call centre	1062.605	1	1062.605	11.11	.001
Gender	383.645	1	383.645	4.012	.047
Call centre* gender	928.805	1	928.805	9.712	.002
Error	18744.540	196	95.635		
Total	654945.000	200			

environment and its design and layout can affect employee behavior in the workplace. Brill (1992) estimates that improvements in the physical design of the workplace may result in a 5-10 percent increase in employee productivity. Stallworth and Kleiner (1996) argue that increasingly an organization's physical layout is designed around employee needs in order to maximize productivity and satisfaction. They argue that innovative workplaces can be developed to encourage the sharing of information and networking without regard to job boundaries and to allow networked and spontaneous communication across departmental groups.

Table 2 ANOVA summary of role boundary on occupational stress and mean score (Fig. 2) exhibited that the international call centre employee was more on role boundary than the employee from domestic call centre. Regarding the gender on main effect on role boundary a significant difference was found. The mean of mean score of male employees were more as compare to the female employees. Table 2 showed that the interactional effect of call centre X gender was found to be significant. The finding of the study is on the line of previous researches which revealed that Role boundary and the customer service representatives have to deal with periods of uncontrollable high call traffic during without a break or time out. This can result in high demands being placed on the role they play, which could deplete their energy and create boundary (Deery *et al.*, 2002; Holman, 2003; Singh, 1993; Zapf *et al.*, 2003).

It is common that operators at call center companies do not have their own workplace; instead they have to take any available workstation that is free or affordable. This means that there are higher demands for the furniture and equipment to be adjustable. Call center operators need to be comfortable during the long, unbroken periods they spend at their workstations, so optimal environmental conditions are required.

Suggestion and limitations of the study:

The inclination of empirical research pretend to be overview to the other areas of study despite the call centre, this paper play the same role to ponder to understand the organizational behavior under the particular title. However the findings are primarily based on the response of the subject, whereas the study focuses on specific factors rather than occupational stress as a whole. Data collected from domestic and international call centers with the confidentiality to hidden the name of the organization.

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