

Impact of Human Resources Shared Services Center on Employee Retention - Evidence from Select Retail Organizations in India

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ABSTRACT

Organizations have discovered and research studies have shown that retaining employees is less expensive than attempting to attract new ones. Companies realize that in order to develop long-term relationship with employees and business growth, they must focus on the service of employee satisfaction and motivation. One of the ways of achieving this is through effective implementation of Human Resources Shared Services Center (hereafter referred as HRSSC) as it can have significant impact on employee satisfaction level leading to increase in the talent retention rate. HRSSC is a technique that helps organization to retain employees by providing superior services. HRSSC achieves its objectives by using proven methodologies and ebusiness technologies in increasing employee satisfaction levels and retaining staff and in building long lasting relationship - key to financial success. Therefore, the purposes of this study is to find whether HRSSC in select case companies leads to Talent Retention or not, explore the impact of HRSSC on satisfaction levels and talent retention.

Keywords: Employees, Loyalty, Management, Retail, Retention, Quality, Service etc.

INTRODUCTION

Impact of globalization, competition, growing employee acquisition cost, employee awareness and expectations, higher turnover, legal ecosystem, technological innovation has introduced a new opportunity called HRSSC for organizations to provide faster and superior services to the employees. Today, customers and employees are the most important stakeholders for any industry. With the rise in income level and the standard of living, and increasing competition it has become necessary to keep them (employees) satisfied. Employees impacts both long-and short-term policies and objectives of manufacturers, service providers and intermediaries. Therefore, it has become necessary for organizations to have enough knowledge of different environments and

employee expectations, to squeeze the gap between perceived and expected services, and thereby to design strategies against services failures. HRSSC helps organizations to retain their employees and also improves their satisfaction level by providing special services.

Human Resources are key asset for any organization. By effective management of People resources, organization can achieve the set goals of performance, growth and profitability. Strategy to keep the employees motivated, engaged and loyal form the core focus of Human Resources management. One of the means of achieving this is through effective implementation of HR Shared Services that cater to wide gamut of employee needs that include organizational policy dissemination, employee communication, query

management, announcements, employee records management, payroll, benefits administration, performance management, organizational learning, general administration, report generation, analytics etc. HRSSC provides speed, accuracy, efficiency and consistency in service delivery.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

Organizations have discovered and research studies have shown that retaining Existing Employees is less expensive than attempting to get new ones. Companies realized that in order to develop long term relationship with Employees, they must focus on the Employee value Proposition. This can also be achieved to some extent through HRSSC as they can have significant impact on Employee Satisfaction level, leading to increase Employee retention rate.

Therefore, purpose of this study is to explore the impact of HRSSC on Employee retention in the era of 'War for Talent'.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

There are number of Retail Organizations in India, and the level of competition is severe. Race to acquire new Employees to sustain growth and to retain the existing workforce is at its peak. Competitors are coming with new service offerings to remain competitive and outperform.

Objective 1

Whether implementation of HRSSC in Retail industry leads to Employee Retention or not.

Objective 2

Whether HRSSC helps in offering better services to Employees as per their preferences or not.

Objective 3

Whether HRSSC helps in introducing new avenues for both Business and Employees or not.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To delve deeper into the research subject, it is important to gain insights from past research on Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, Job Satisfaction and Human Resources Shared Services Center.

Customer Satisfaction - Most companies today acknowledge that they have to meet the needs of their customers in order to keep them and to attract new customers (Hill, Brierley & MacDougall, 1999:1). The literature provides several definitions of customer satisfaction that can be described as the customer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that an administration or an item has given the customer a pleasurable dimension of utilization related satisfaction (Oliver, 2010:8). Consumer satisfaction can likewise be characterized as a marvel dependent on a result or a procedure (Vavra, 1997:4) or the clients' assessment of an utilization experience (Klaus, 1985:17).

The absence of an agreement definition may cause a few issues for customer satisfaction research (Giese & Cote, 2002). Peterson and Wilson (1992) determine that the most serious problem is the inability to interpret and compare empirical results. They recommend that customer satisfaction ought to be made operational as per the exploration objective so as to restrain shifting outcomes (Peterson and Wilson, 1992).

Yi (1993) features that the different meanings of customer satisfaction demonstrate that there are a wide range of levels or parts to this term. Customers can be satisfied with a product, a purchase decision experience, a performance attribute, a consumption experience, or a pre-purchase experience (Yi, 1993).

A standout amongst the most prevalent method for clarifying customer satisfaction is that of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) who created SERVQUAL. In service organizations, the assessment of the service quality happens during the delivery of the service and this assessment may lead to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Pizam & Ellis, 1999).

SERVQUAL suggests five dimensions of service quality believed to result in customer satisfaction. The five dimensions are: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles such as the facilities, equipment and personnel (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

As customer satisfaction evolved, other competing theories have also been suggested for explaining it, such as dissonance theory, contrast theory, the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm, comparison level theory, the value- percept theory, the importance-performance model, attribution theory, equity theory, evaluation congruity theory and the person-situation-fit concept (Yüksel, 2008:65).

Service Quality - Ghobadian et al. (1994) expressed that service quality is key to remain profitable and successful in modern day context. Chapman et al.(2005) argued in favor of provisions for quality service to meet customer expectations. According to Ghosh and Jiju (2004), quality service includes meeting and always exceeding the expectations level of the customer.

A customer holds service expectations based on different criteria's that includes past experiences, word of mouth, and perceived value. Customers always make comparison of perceived service (PS) and expected service (ES) (Grewal et al., 1998). If the Perceived value falls below the Expected Service level, customers are disgruntled; else customers will intend to purchase services again in future. Ingram (1996) states that service quality received impetus from businesses due to its practical implications in defining customer satisfaction and positive word of mouth. Many organizations focus in enhancing service levels and building customer loyalty. In order to achieve these goals, Yang (2004) highlighted the need to constantly attempt to understand what the customers' desires. To remain competitive and retain talent, companies must deliver quality service that results in customers' satisfaction. Services must be of superior quality than expected;

otherwise, customers will be dissatisfied (Shinwell et al., 1998).

Numerous studies have looked for customer satisfaction in service industry (Almanza et al., 1994; and Gundersen et al., 1996). The important task is to measure the customers' satisfaction level and achieve that (Lam et al., 1996; Lewis and Nightingale, 1991). A company if able to understand the different drivers of customer's satisfaction has a competitive advantage over others (Garvin, 1991; Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml 1991). Non achievement of this parameter, will prove to be costly affair, as customers communicate negative experiences to others that ultimate will lead to loss of business (Chon et al., 1991).

Job Satisfaction - Job satisfaction has been a topic of great interest and largely discussed among scholars and managers. In present day scenario where, human resources are treated as an indispensable corporate asset - maintaining and increasing job satisfaction, retaining competent workers, reducing people turnover, improving the organizational work efficiency, appointing suitable personnel to suitable positions, and motivating employees are all major tasks deliberated and performed by the management.

Job satisfaction, or occupational contentedness, was first postulated by Hop pock, who defined job satisfaction as employees' psychological and physiological satisfaction with environmental circumstance. It indicates their subjective reaction to the work environment. From the time Hoppock developed the concept of job satisfaction; numerous studies have explored the topic. Vroom's definition of job satisfaction emphasizes on the degree of employees' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job roles that they perform. If the roles suit their orientations, they obtain job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction may also be affected by job-inherent factors that involve an employee's objectives and expectations

associated with the job. In other words, the level of job satisfaction may be determined by the comparison between job outcomes and job objectives or expectations. Thus, according to Locke's discrepancy theory, an employee's job satisfaction increases as the content, process, and outcomes of an actual job increasingly adhere to an employee's objectives or expectations associated with the task. By contrast, if the task content, process, and outcome are distant from an employee's objectives, the discrepancy can cause a psychological conflict, or cognitive dissonance, that in turn decreases job satisfaction.

In addition, individual and organizational factors can affect job satisfaction. Individual factors include demographic characteristics, perception, cognitive ability, capability, expectations, a sense of achievement and personality traits. Organizational factors can influence job satisfaction as well. These include compensation and benefits policy, working conditions, job level, fellow worker relationships, supervisor-subordinate relationships, job security, promotion opportunity, role responsibility and the possibility of career development.

The level of job satisfaction influences an employee's behavior and attitudes toward the job holder perform and directly affect job performance. High job satisfaction can contribute to low absenteeism and strong intentions to stay and produce positive effects on the organization. Contrary to this, low job satisfaction can result in high absence rates and frequent employee turnovers.

Human Resources Shared Service Center

- The concept of shared services was originally born in Northern America in the late 1980s. General Electric (GE) was the first company that set up a financial shared service center to consolidate all their accounting operations in the United States of America in order to reach economies of scale and improve its common accounting systems (Fisher, 1998).

HR shared services model has been widely used and has now become regularly accepted as a mean of delivering cost-reduction and enhancing performance levels while providing a foundation for more effective HR services (Boroughs & Saunders, 2007). During turbulent Economic Times more and more companies embraced HR Shared Services Model to lower the cost of their operations. The companies attempted to focus more on core businesses and centralize or outsource support services to boost their productivity.

Shared service center refers to insourcing of corporate activities with intent to establish a new business unit to deliver services to a range of in-house clients in place of separate function (Sparrow & Braun, 2008). Dave Ulrich (1995) also advises about the definition of shared services model that SSC, a single organizational phenomenon, occur when separate business units within a company are brought together. It is a business within a business and is responsible for supporting the organizational unit by delivering needed services at the highest value but with lowest cost.

Quinn et al. (2000) and Oates (1998) have held the view that the shared services practices had been developed beyond the boundaries of the single organizational unit. The shared service center may also be found as a separate business unit which has to be relied on the board of directors. As HR shared service center, chosen HRM exercises are "focused, or packaged, into another semi-self-governing specialty unit that performs HRM exercises for the business by giving administrations that are shared by different hierarchical substances and coordinated to various end-client gatherings" (Meatman, Bondarouk, & Looise, 2010). Company consolidates all administrative tasks and transaction works into a shared service center which isolate from ordinary services within an organization. The center includes all activities in one location by employing information and communication technology

to support this organizational structure. However, some researchers such as Ulrich (1995) argue that HR shared services people are not physically brought into one location but are co-located with their business teams because they have to participate in both the business team and HR team.

Role of HR Shared Service Center
HRSSC is a relatively new form of HR organizational structure which leads to the centralization of activities to avoid duplication but still remains responsive to local business needs (Janssen & Joha, 2006). Responsibility is realigned in a shared services organization. People in business unit are moved away from managing day-to-day delivery of services. With the new structure, there are a dramatical reduce in the number of staffs in HR functions as well as scope and impact.

To understand the roles for HR staffs in SSC structure, Reilly & Williams (2003) propose three different tiers of HR roles. First tier is HR generalist or call-agent who provides basic problem solving. HR advisor is the second tier of HR roles suggested in their model. HR advisor has a higher-level expertise and gives better support than HR generalist. The final tier in the model is HR expert who involves with policy design capability. Within the SSC structure, the main role of HR is to support their line management team in executing their strategies and addressing their business imperatives (Leland, 2000). HR shared services include the provision of compensation, benefits, payroll, organization development and performance management. This new HR structure deploys integrated human resource information systems technology and self-service functionality to deliver the highest value at a reduced cost for multiple line managers and employees. These new systems or system upgrades give organizations an opportunity to concentrate their service activities in one site by moving the work away from individual business units toward shared service center (Herbert,

2008). This consolidated service center not only improves better customer service levels but also enhances communication between company and its employees. This new structure transfers increasing responsibility away from HR to line managers for the implementation of HRM. However, these benefits will occur only when “service delivery is the core competency of shared services, resulting in better management, better service quality, lower costs, and ultimately higher levels of client satisfaction” (Horan & Vernon, 2003).

Best practices are employed in nearly every organization to attain competitive advantage with customers. For SSC, it is necessary to create an efficient partnership that addresses both sides of the internal equation (Leland, 2000) which allows customers to define the services they like and the quantity they need. “The user is the chooser” (Ulrich, 1995). The provider does not decide which services it will deliver but it allows internal customers to take up services they want. On the other hand, service providers can know what they have to contribute. The agreed-on services would be delivered within the agreed service level and standards at competitive rate through best practices. It implies that both customers and providers need to coordinate with each other and share responsibility for the results. Creelman (2008) suggests that a unique service provider-recipient relationship must be set up.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS:

On the basis of literature review, some of the research

(H1): Implementation of HRSSC in retail Organizations leads to Employee Retention.

(H2): HRSSC offers better and improved services to Employees according to their preferences.

(H3): HRSSC introduces new avenues for both Business and Employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Stage I

The research applied both the approaches of qualitative and quantitative. Primary and secondary data was used to conduct study. To collect the theoretical issues (secondary data) various HRSSC related books, journals, websites and portals are tallied. Essential information is gathered by survey, interviews, their day to day archives or log files, direct observations and physical artifacts.

Questionnaire was developed in form of five point Likert Scale ('1' = Strongly Agree to '5' = Strongly Disagree) and then reviewed.

For analyzing the hypothesis, a well-structured questionnaire is designed and collected data is analyzed by IBM SPSS 19.0. Basic analysis applied on the data is T-test. Data was collected from a total sample size of 120 customers, but only 104 questionnaires were received that were dully filled. For the benefit of proper analysis, 4 questionnaires were randomly discarded and only 100 responses were utilized for analysis.

DT2 : Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.911	26
As the value is 0.911 which is very high and indicates strong internal consistency among the items	

Demographic Profile:

64% of the respondents were male while the other 36% were females.

47% of the respondents are from the age group of 21-35 years, 26% in age group of 36-50; and 27% of the respondents are in age group of more than 50.

55% of the respondents are post graduates while 45% are graduates;

Testing the Hypothesis:

Case 1:

Stage II

In order to support the findings of Stage I, a survey was conducted in three other Retail Organizations in India. Questionnaire with an objective "To check whether HRSSC impact the rate of employee retention and satisfaction on other Retail Organizations or not" was developed and analyzed. The survey was developed only for employees of the three organizations to find out their opinion about HRSSC and its benefits.

Questionnaire was again developed in form of five point Likert Scale ('1' = Strongly Agree to '5' = Strongly Disagree) and reviewed.

ANALYSIS AND DATA

INTERPRETATION:

Stage 1 Quality Test of Research

DT1 : Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Case Valid	100	100.0
Excluded	0	0.0
Total	100	100.0

This case tried to study whether implementation of HRSSC in Test Case retail Organization leads to increase in the Employee Retention or not.

(H0): Implementation of HRSSC in Retail Organization will not lead to Employee Retention ($\mu = 3$)

(H1): Implementation of HRSSC in Retail Organization leads to Employee Retention ($\mu < 3$)

DT3 : One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Var 1	100	1.5500	1.13150	0.11315

DT4 : One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Var1	13.699	99	0.000	1.55000	1.3255	1.7745

DT4 shows that the significant is 0.00 which is lesser than 0.05 and the calculated value of 't' is 13.699. So, null hypothesis will be rejected and alternative hypothesis is

accepted. As the confidence interval μ is less than 3, alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. This interpret that "Implementation of

HRSSC in test Retail Organization will improve Employee Retention Rate”.

Case2:

This case explored whether HRSSC is capable of providing better and improved services to Employee of Test Case Retail Organization as per requirements or not.

(H0): HRSSC does not offers better and improved services to Employees according to their preferences ($\mu = 3$)

(H2): HRSSC offers better and improved services to Employees according to their preferences ($\mu < 3$)

DT5 : One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Var2	100	1.6800	1.09064	0.10906

Dt6 : One- Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Var 2	15.404	99	0.000	1.68000	1.4636	1.8964

DT6 shows that the significant is 0.00 which is lesser than 0.05 and the calculated value of 't' is 15.404. So, null hypothesis will be rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. As the confidence interval μ is less than 3, alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. This interpret that “Implementation of HRSSC in Retail Organizations offers better and improved services to Employees according to their preferences”.

This case tried to study whether factor like use of Information Technology provides assistance to HR Practitioners and helps them in providing more attention toward Employees of test Retail Organization or not.

(H0): HRSSC does not introduce any new opportunities for both Business and Employees.

(H3): HRSSC introduces new avenues for both Business and Customers.

Case3:

DT7: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Var3	100	1.8400	1.16965	0.11696

DT8: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Var 3	15.731	99	0.000	1.84000	1.6079	2.0721

DT8 shows that the significant is 0.00 that is lesser than 0.05 and the calculated value of 't' is 15.731. So, null hypothesis will be rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. As the confidence interval μ is less than 3, alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. This interpret that “HRSSC helps in introducing new avenues for both Business and Employees”.

DT9: One-Sample Statistics

Retail Companies using HRSSC	Statistics	
	Loyalty Score (Mean)	Std. Deviation
Retail Company 1	3.97	0.52
Retail Company 2	4.64	0.28
Retail Company 3	4.38	0.41

Interpretation: Retail Companies using HRSSC have higher loyalty scores at higher side.

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of the research was to study the impact of HRSSC on Employee Retention. HRSSC is a key element of the modern HR Strategy in retaining people in large and goring organizations. Companies

across the world are trying to make use of Technology and practices like HRSSC to help them in managing their most important asset “People”. On the other hand, acquiring and retaining employees proved to be a challenging task. Based on data analysis, it was interpreted that implementing HRSSC in Retail Organizations helps to improve Employee Retention. During the research, learning is that retaining the existing Employee is much cheaper than acquiring the new ones. Employee satisfaction may result into loyalty and retention. It was even identified during research that it is cheaper to keep the existing Employees happy than to get new ones. Maintaining relations with existing Employees and to encourage them to remain loyal with company is a dynamic and meticulous job. It is important to take a note that HRSSC can play a curtail role in success of an organization, but the way they are used can make substantial difference in outcome.

Employee Value Proposition and Management – is a recent emerging approach of attraction for corporations. The goal is to identify the value that can be delivered to Employees along with their products and services through their supportive processes. The EVP methodology incorporates a key concept from HRSSC is that the success comes from focusing, understanding and serving targeted Employees effectively. Need is to perform Employee performance and potential analysis to understand whether he/she is contributing towards Organizational growth and Business Outcomes and find reasons for gaps and means to bridge them. It must also be kept in mind that all Employees are not the same and retaining 100% of Employees is not possible. HRSSC is based on the idea of treating different Employees individually. In another words, it is not possible to attract and retain all Employees with the same policy and treatment. Companies have to adjust their methods and engage with their Employees in understanding their need and serving to that. Moreover, the top

management or strategic makers must consider “Employee Retention” as a main stream activity that invites same level of consideration and attention as other departments needed.

Limitations of the Study:

Lack of support by the Employees who feared about the true purpose of research despite assurances and they did not participate. Staff filled the questionnaires at the reception as a result of which some of their bias towards positive rating towards organization’s initiatives cannot be ruled out. Time and money was the major constraints.

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