

Relation Between Job Attitudes And Attrition: An Exploratory Study On Information Technology (IT) And Information Technology Enabled Services (ITeS) Sector Employees In India

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ABSTRACT

Attrition is becoming an area of growing concern in the Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITeS) sector. The purpose of this paper is to investigate Job Attitudes and their relationship with the IT and ITeS employees' attrition in India. 610 samples were chosen by the convenience sampling method through a questionnaire. Data was analyzed by using the chi-square test and correlation analysis. The chi-square test proved the main hypothesis that there is a relationship between job attitudes and attrition. The results were strengthened by the correlation analysis. In the study, six job attitude variables viz. Achievement, Advancement, Recognition, Growth, Responsibility and Reward were considered. It was observed from the data that when the employees have a positive job attitude, then the attrition tendency among the employees is negative. Eventually, a positive attitude could reduce the rate of attrition. All the variables of job attitude were significantly related to attrition. Hence, the compelling conclusion which emerges from the present study is that a positive job attitude leads to retention; whereas a negative job attitude leads to a high rate of attrition among the IT and ITeS sector employees in India.

Keywords : Attrition, Job Attitudes, IT Sector, ITeS Sector, Motivation, Retention of Employees, Employee Behaviour, Job Satisfaction

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Human resources such as skill, knowledge and competencies are the key instruments in helping organizations to sustain their competitive advantage in the knowledge economy. Barney et al. (1998) said that globally competitive organizations depend on the uniqueness of their human resources and the systems for managing human resources effectively to gain a competitive advantage. Human resources are not only the principal value creators of the knowledge industry, but they are also the intellectual capital or the 'infrastructure investment'. Therefore, attracting, training, retaining and motivating employees are the critical success determinants for any knowledge-based organization.

Sharma et al. (2011) in their research attempted to find out why there is a huge attrition during the probation period in Indian corporates. Is it the organizational culture or the lack of motivation among employees? They attempted at unearthing the actual causes of high attrition during the probation period. They developed a theoretical framework to enhance the understanding of attrition trends and its probable causes. Their research findings stated that there are many more critical elements like Achievement, Advancement, Recognition, Growth, Responsibility and Reward than are actually considered. Hence, this may be directed towards the next phase of attrition research on a much wider scale.

This study explores the relationship between Job Attitude and Attrition. March and Simon (1958) described each member's participation in an organization as contingent upon an inducement contribution utility balance that is, in turn, a function of two major distinct but related motivational forces;

(1) The perceived desirability and ;

(2) The perceived ease of movement out of the organization.

The perceived desirability of movement is mainly influenced by job attitudes and is often described as a “push” factor.

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Perceived ease of movement depends on each person's perception of the availability of jobs in the external job market and is often described as a “pull” factor. These are otherwise known as Job Attitudes. Despite March and Simon's (1958) pioneering work on psychological mechanisms, which suggested the interaction of perceived desirability and ease of movement as a main determinant of actual attrition, it was not until Mobley's (1988) model that researchers began to elaborate on the cognitive or psychological decision processes linking negative job attitudes with actual voluntary attrition. Mobley focused on attrition as a process and sought to map out psychological and perceptual processes thought to mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and attrition. Specifically, in the model, he proposed a series of links between individuals' evaluations of their current jobs and actual attrition in a causal order: Evaluation of Existing job → Job dissatisfaction → Thinking of quitting → Evaluation of expected utility of search and cost of quitting → Intention to search for alternatives → Search for alternatives → Evaluation of alternatives → Comparison of alternatives vs. present job → Intention to quit/stay → Quit/stay.

Subsequent models have generally reflected the influence of both March and Simon's (1958) push and pull factors, and the intervening psychological mechanisms between job attitudes and actual attrition described by Mobley (1988). The researchers have made three general observations on such models. First, they typically describe “the employment search process as an outgrowth of disaffection” and the translation of dissatisfaction into search and then quitting as “highly rationalized, systematic and orderly”. Such models have, likewise, been described as depicting an “orderly progression from dissatisfaction” or a “slow burn, deliberative process”. Second, these models do include pull factors (e.g., Job attitudes, unemployment rate, and perceived alternative job opportunities).

Third, almost certainly related to the first two observations, empirical evidence over the years appears to indicate that there is room for improvement in such models regarding how well (e.g., in terms of predictive validity and/or model fit) they capture and describe voluntary attrition decisions. Therefore, the concept of this study is going to be developed based upon two components i.e., Job Satisfaction and Attitudes, and Attrition. These two components are explained in the following paragraphs.

JOB ATTITUDES

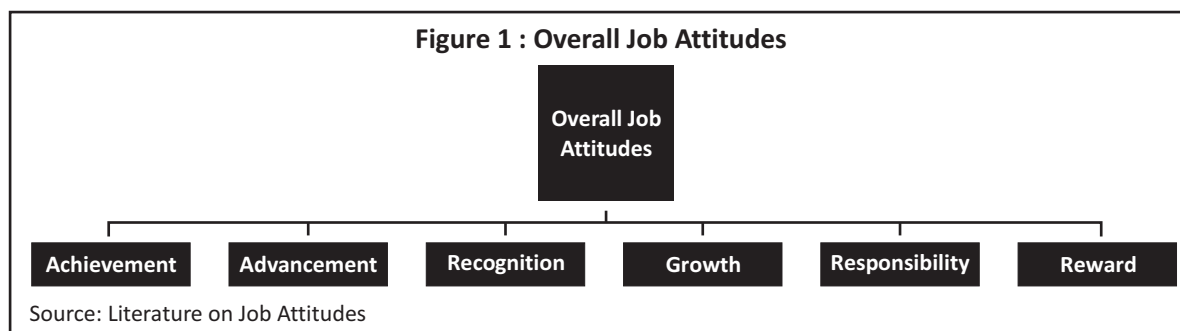
Job attitude is a long-term feeling which is formed by the employees about their job. The attitudes are classified into two types - namely positive attitude and negative attitude. Positive attitude is an attitude, which can motivate the employees and give job satisfaction. Negative attitude is an attitude which can neither motivate the employees nor give them job satisfaction. Literature on Job Attitudes have identified the following factors that lead to motivation and development of positive attitude. Here, the attitudes are built up and developed based upon the following variables.

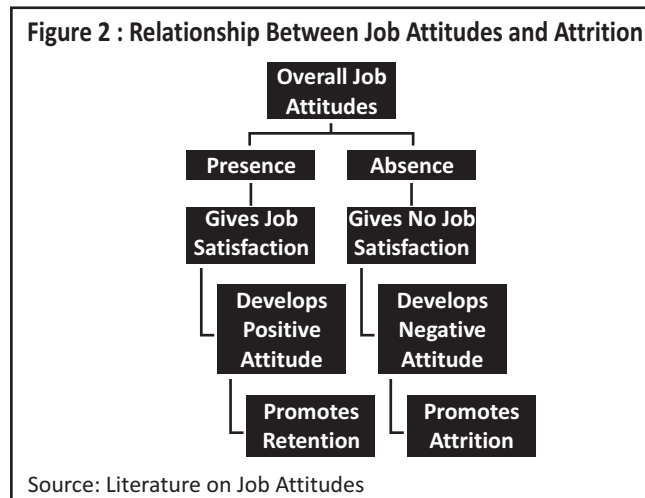
1) Achievement ; 2) Advancement ; 3) Recognition ; 4) Growth ; 5) Responsibility and 6) Reward (Figure 1).

ATTRITION

Attrition means an employee who withdraws himself permanently from one company and switches over to another very frequently.

❖ **Relationship Between Job Attitude And Attrition** : This study focuses on the attitudes of employees' role play in





attrition. It is predicted that positive attitude leads to less attrition, and more retention and negative attitude leads to more attrition. The relationship between job attitudes and attrition is explained in the Figure 2.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study was initiated to seek answers for the attrition problem faced by the IT and ITeS Sector. There may be personal factors of employees, organizational factors, job factors and attitudes of employees about their job as the causes for attrition, but this study focuses on job attitudes of employees and its role in attrition.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND HYPOTHESES

This study focuses particularly on job attitudes of employees and its role in attrition as its objectives. Therefore, the specific objective of the study is the ascertainment of the nature of association between job attitudes and employees' attrition. On the basis of this objective, the following hypotheses were developed and tested :

- ❖ **H₁: There is a relationship between a positive job attitude and retention of employees.**
- ❖ **H₂: There is a relationship between a negative job attitude and attrition of employees.**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

❖ **Pilot Study :** A Pilot study was conducted using a self administrated questionnaire that was used to collect the necessary data to find out the reliability of the questionnaire. The instrument had three parts. Part I dealt with personal and organizational data of IT and ITeS employees ; Part II dealt with statements related to job attitudes' variables i.e. Achievement, Advancement, Recognition, Growth, Responsibility and Reward developed for this study. These items were developed by the researchers based on the literature related to job attitudes and attrition, work motivation and attrition and job satisfaction and attrition. The items were tested by using a five point scale. Part III consisted of questions relating to the measurement of attrition. These statements were placed on a three point scale. The pilot study was conducted by interviewing 50 sample respondents - 10 samples each were interviewed from Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Mumbai and Hyderabad. The reliability and validity test is shown by the following Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity Test			
Variables	No of Items	Sample Size	Alpha Sum
Job Attitudes	24	50	0.8976
Attrition	10	50	0.7700
Source: Primary Data			

The Table 1 shows the reliability level of job attitudes statements and attrition statements given in the questionnaire. The reliability level of the Job Attitudes statements is above 89.76% and that of Attrition is 77%. It shows that the statements were reliable. From this table, it is inferred that by using these statements, a uniform result could be obtained anywhere in the world. After testing the reliability of the questionnaire, data collection was made.

❖ **Data Collection and Sample Selection** : A self administrated questionnaire used in the pilot study was also used to collect the necessary data for this study. The questionnaire was administered to 1500 employees of the IT and ITeS sector working in Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune and Kolkata. However, only 800 respondents returned the questionnaire and out of the 800 received questionnaires, only 610 questionnaires could be used for data analysis. The remaining 190 questionnaires were unusable due to lack of information furnished by the respondents. Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Pune and Kolkata were chosen as the sample areas because these areas come under the top six IT hubs of India and more than 68.29 percent of the IT and ITeS industry is concentrated in these areas. The study was conducted from November 2007 to November 2011.

❖ **Mode of Collection of Data** : The data was directly collected by the researchers and the questionnaires were also posted to the respondents. Out of the 610 respondents, 70 percent were from the IT sector and 30 percent were from the ITeS sector.

❖ **Limitations of The Study** : The limitations applicable to all behavioral studies hold good in this case too. First, the size of the sample was not large enough to give a chance for fair representation to the entire universe. However, statistical validity and reliability tests can establish the accuracy of the data. Care was taken to understand and interpret the results.

❖ **Nature of The Study** : This is basically a behavioral study. However, it is exploratory in nature. The objective of the study is to investigate attrition per se. Needless to say, when it is hypothesized that the major factor contributing to attrition are job attitudes, a deep and thorough investigation of job attitudes was undertaken, apart from this, certain personal and organizational backgrounds of the respondents needed to be related to job attitudes and attrition. A questionnaire to this effect had been designed. The researchers examined various methods in the study of attitudes and attrition like interview method, in-depth interviews, psycho analytical approach, observation, etc.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive as well as inferential and percentage analysis were used for frequency distribution. The descriptive as well as inferential analysis was made by using chi-square test and structural equation model through confirmatory factor analysis to test the hypotheses.

❖ **Conceptualization of Job Attitudes** : Job attitudes are a long-term feeling, which are formed by the employees about their unfulfilled expectations from their jobs. The attitudes are classified into two types - namely positive attitude and negative attitude. Positive attitude is the attitude which can motivate the employees and provide them with job satisfaction. Negative attitude is the attitude which cannot motivate the employees. The positive and negative job attitudes could be identified with help the of mean score secured by each statement individually. 24 job attitude statements were included in the questionnaire. The statements were derived from variables of job attitudes i.e. Achievement, Advancement, Recognition, Growth, Responsibility and Reward. Each and every variable consisted of

Table 2: Mean Sum Of The Statements Of Achievement	
Statements	Mean Sum
The job is complicated. However, I usually finish my work on time.	3.96
I do this job so that I can achieve something in my life.	3.90
I get immediate response from my superiors about my accomplishments.	3.75
I feel elated after achieving something.	3.82
Source: Primary Data	

Table 3 : Mean Sum Of The Statements Of Advancement	
Statements	Mean Sum
There is a lot of variety in the work I do.	3.72
Every day, I am made to feel that a value addition is made by me.	3.71
Time just passes by in my work life.	3.84
The more work I do, the more I feel that I should do some more.	3.95
Source: Primary Data	

Table 4: Mean Sum Of The Statements Of Recognition	
Statements	Mean Sum
I get immediate feedback regarding my work and performance.	3.93
I change my style of functioning after I get the feedback.	4.03
There is a lot of recognition for meritocracy.	3.58
My company and my superiors recognize my achievements.	3.61
Source: Primary Data	

Table 5: Mean Sum Of The Statements Of Growth	
Statements	Mean Sum
What I do in the job is meaningful to me.	3.85
I feel very significant in my work life.	3.83
I work with the people who are creative and innovative.	3.88
Sky is the limit for growth in my organization.	3.54
Source: Primary Data	

Table 6: Mean Sum Of The Statements Of Responsibility	
Statements	Mean Sum
My present job offers a lot of challenges.	4.22
The Management trusts me and assigns me difficult tasks.	3.91
I myself feel responsible for the work that is assigned to me.	4.10
I really enjoy the autonomy given to me.	3.80
Source: Primary Data	

Table 7: Mean Sum Of The Statements Of Rewards	
Statements	Mean Sum
The task assigned to me is highly enjoyable.	3.97
There is intrinsic pleasure in the work I do.	3.84
I can select my teammates in my job.	3.40
Accomplishments are reasonably rewarded in my company.	3.68
Source: Primary Data	

Table No 8: The Cut - off Point For Negative (Low), Average (Normal) And High (Positive) Job Attitudes			
The cut off point for negative (low), average (normal) and high (positive) Job Attitudes is as follows :			
Particulars	Percentile:25 (First quartile Q ₁)	Median (Second quartile Q ₂)	Percentile:75 (Third quartile Q ₃)
Overall Job Attitudes	84	93	100
Source: Primary Data			

four statements. The mean sum of each and every statement is ascertained and shown in for every variable of job attitude. The mean sum amounted to indicate the level of job attitudes. When the mean score increased, the attitude levels also increased positively. A low mean score indicates a negative job attitude. Statements of every variable of job attitudes and their mean sum as shown in the following Tables 2 - 7.

The Table 8 shows that the employees who scored below the first quartile had a negative job attitude (low job attitude). The employees who scored above the third quartile had a positive job attitude (high job attitude). The employees who scored between the first quartile and the third quartile had a normal job attitude (average job attitude).

Table 9: Frequency Distribution Of Job Attitude Levels		
Level of Job Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Low	169	27.70
Average	271	44.43
High	170	27.87
Total	610	100.00
Source: Primary Data		

The researchers segregated job attitudes into positive and negative to attain the objectives of the study with help of percentile and median, and the results are presented in the Table 9. The employees who scored points above the average/median had a positive job attitude. The employees who scored below the average/median were identified to possess a negative job attitude; the employees who scored average points or points at the median were identified to possess a normal or moderate job attitude (neither good, nor bad). The Table 9 shows that out of the 610 sample respondents , 27.70 percent employees had a negative job attitude; 44.43 percent of the employees had an average or normal job attitude and 27.87 percent of the employees had a positive job attitude. It is confirmed from the above table that a majority of the employees had an average level of job attitude and employees who had negative and positive job attitudes were equal to each other. So, it is concluded that the most of the respondent employees were balancing their attitudes towards an opportunity given for Achievement, Advancement, Recognition, Growth, Responsibility and Reward.

❖ **Conceptualization of Attrition** : Attrition occurs when an employee withdraws himself permanently from one company and switches over to another very frequently. Attrition is conceptualized into low, average and high. The Table 10 shows the mean sum of attrition. Attrition was taken as a single variable in the questionnaire. The mean score shows the intention of employees to resign from their present company. When the mean score increases, the intention level for attrition also increases automatically. The greater is the mean score, the greater is the intention level of the employees for quitting their present job from the present company.

The Table 11 presents the cut-off points for low, average, and high rate of attrition.

The employees who scored below the first quartile are labeled as employees with low attrition tendency. The employees who scored above the third quartile are labeled as employees with a high attrition tendency. The employees who scored between 20 and 25 points are labeled as employees with average attrition tendency.

The Table 12 shows that out of the 610 respondent employees, 23.77 percent employees had a low attrition tendency, 49.51 percent employees had an average attrition tendency and 26.72 percent employees had a high level of attrition

Table 10 : Mean Score of Attrition		
No	Statements	Mean
1	Will you leave your present job if better monetary offer comes your way?	2.45
2	When the competitor of your company approaches you with an attractive employment offer, what will be your response, will you resign from your present job?	2.05
3	There is nothing unethical about resigning/quitting the present job in search of better prospects.	2.38
4	Would you accept a better role if the same is offered to you by your company's competitor?	2.30
5	If you are denied promotion, would you resign from your present job?	2.07
6	Would you accept a voluntary job offer in a better location than in the present city/town in which you're currently employed?	2.29
7	If you are not authorized to take individual work decisions, will you resign from your present job?	2.04
8	Will your consciousness allow you to resign from your present job if you are not supported at the time of crisis by your company?	2.15
9	Would you like to change your company when autonomy is not given to you?	2.17
10	If better freedom and responsibility are given to you, will you quit your present job?	2.09
Source: Primary Data		

Table 11: The Cut Off Points For Low, Average And High Rate of Attrition			
The cut off point for low, average, and high rate of attrition is as follows :			
Particulars	Percentile:25 (First quartile Q ₁)	Median (Second quartile Q ₂)	Percentile:75 (Third quartile Q ₃)
Overall Attrition score	20	22	25
Source: Primary Data			

Table 12: Frequency Distribution of Level of Attrition		
Level of Job Attrition	Frequency	Percentage
Low	145	23.77
Average	302	49.51
High	163	26.72
Total	610	100.00
Source: Primary Data		

tendency. It is confirmed from the Table 12 that the employees who had an average attrition tendency got the second rank and employees with a low attrition tendency got the third i.e. the last rank. It shows that when the employees are moderately experienced, they wish to switch their job from the present company to another company when they do not find an opportunity for further growth in the present company.

❖ **Relationship Between Job Attitudes And Attrition** : The relationship between job attitudes and attrition is made as follows :

❖ **Hypothesis I:**

❖ **Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between the level of Job Attitudes and Attrition.**

Since P value is less than 0.01, hence, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 percent level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between job attitudes and attrition. From the Table 13, it can be inferred that 16.6 percent of the respondents had a low level of job attitude with a low tendency of attrition. 23 percent of the respondents had a low level of job attitude with a high tendency of attrition. 22.4 percent of the employees had a low level of job attitude with a high level of attrition and 35 percent of the respondents had a high level of job attitude with a high tendency of attrition. This table eventually proves the researchers' hypotheses that positive job attitudes

Table 13: Chi-square Test For The Relationship Between Levels Of Job Attitudes And Attrition						
Job Attitudes	Overall Attrition Score				Chi-square Value	P value
	Low	Average	High	Total		
Low	28 (16.6) [19.3]	102 (60.4) [33.8]	39 (23.1) [23.9]	169	19.684	0.001**
Average	79 (29.2) [54.5]	128 (47.2) [42.2]	64 (23.6) [39.3]	271		
High	38 (22.4) [26.2]	72 (42.4) [23.8]	60 (35.3) [36.8]	170		
Total	145	302	163	610		
Note: 1. the value within () refers to Row percentage - Gender						
2.The value within [] refers to Column percentage- Attitudes						
3. ** denotes significant at 1 % level						
4. * denotes significant at 5 % level						
Source: Primary Data						

Table 14: Correlation Coefficient Between Dimensions Of Job Attitudes And Attrition	
Job Attitudes	Attrition
Achievement	-0.527**
Advancement	-0.574**
Recognition	-0.588**
Growth	-0.607**
Responsibility	-0.564**
Reward	-0.586**
Overall Job Attitudes	-0.722**
Source: Primary Data	

lead to retention and negative job attitudes leads to attrition.

The Table 14 depicts that when there is a positive job attitude, then the tendency of attrition will be negative. Eventually, a positive attitude could reduce the rate of attrition. Achievement has -0.527 attrition rate; Advancement has -0.574 attrition rate; Recognition has -0.588 rate of attrition; Growth has -0.607 rate of attrition; Responsibility has -0.564 and Reward has -0.586 rate of attrition. Hence, it is found from the data that different dimensions of Job Attitudes, i.e. Achievement, Advancement, Recognition, Growth, Responsibility and Reward are positively related with each other. It can be deduced from the data that when an employee gets an opportunity to achieve something in his/her job, he invariably grows in his/her job and also acquires, by virtue of his/her performance, additional responsibilities. These developments provide an intrinsic motivation to work hard. In the final analysis, the employee is suitably rewarded for his/her hardwork. This work process builds positive job attitudes in the minds of employees about their job. Likewise, one opportunity for any one dimension of job attitudes which will give a platform to the employees to create an opportunity for all other dimensions of job attitudes. Ultimately, this can build positive interrelationships between the dimensions, eventually which will lead the employees in building positive attitudes about their job. When there is positive attitude, then the attrition tendency among employees will be negative. Hence, positive attitudes are found to reduce the rate of attrition.

All the variables of job attitudes are significantly related to attrition. Hence, the compelling conclusion which emerges from the study is that positive job attitudes lead to retention; whereas negative job attitudes lead to high rates of attrition.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING ATTRITION

As it has been found that positive attitudes are associated with high retention rates, and negative attitudes are associated with high attrition rates, attrition rates can be reduced by developing and building positive Job Attitudes or

removing the negative Job Attitudes among the employees. Positive Job Attitudes can be built and negative Job Attitudes can be removed by motivating employees. The employees can be motivated by enriching their jobs. Job enrichment is the process of making a job more interesting, this can be done with the help of the following suggestions:

- 1) Screen the list to eliminate suggestions that involve demotivation.
- 2) Giving more responsibility that is rarely followed in practice. This practice can elevate to the lyrics of a patriotic anthem for the entire organization.
- 3) Encouraging direct participation of employees who are demotivated for developing positive Job Attitudes. Ideas expressed by the employees who are demotivated can certainly constitute a valuable source for developing and inculcating positive Job Attitudes. At the same time, a sense of participation will result in intrinsic motivation, which can lead to achievement and advancement, which will make the employees feel that they have additional responsibility, and if they fulfill their responsibilities adequately, recognition, growth and rewards will follow, which in turn would lead to the retention of the employees.
- 4) Select those dimensions in which demotivation prevails and these should be eliminated.
- 5) Choose the job that requires changes in its content for developing motivation. By introducing changes in the work pattern, employees can be stimulated, positive attitudes can be built and attrition rates can be reduced.
- 6) Collect the suggestions from the employees who are demotivated ; consolidation and screening should be made on the same and eliminate the suggestions that demotivate the employees.
- 7) Motivated and demotivated employees should be chosen equally and motivation tests should be conducted on them at regular intervals of say three months or six months to evaluate the effectiveness of motivation strategies and steps should be taken to remove the demotivation.
- 8) Attitudes and human relation training should be imparted at regular intervals for inculcating a sense of affinity among the employees towards the organization; which would eventually make the employees loyal to the organization.

The strategies which are implemented for motivating the employees should last for a long period for the following reasons :

- 1) The changes should bring the job up to the level of the challenge matching the skills of the employees.
- 2) The employees who have better skills and are more motivated can get promoted to senior positions.
- 3) The very nature of motivation, as opposed to demotivation can have a much longer effect on employees' behaviour. Therefore, attrition rates can be reduced by enriching the job on the lines suggested above.

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