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Qualitative Research Methods

The psychic Prison - Metaphorical View of the call centers: A

Qualitative Study on the Indian call centers

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Abstract

In the current business scenario, the call centers are significant in order to provide service to customers by engaging agents. They are the most prominent means of communication between the organisation and the customers. It can be said that the call centers flourished due to the advancement in the technology. Similarly, India is country where there are the number of calls centers which provide support to customer in various sectors. The Indian call centers are either outsourced which means that the call center have their offices in India ,however customer base will be from a foreign country especially the UK or the USA. The other call centers are inhouse call centers which means that the they service customer within India. Though there is increasing number of call centers as mentioned earlier, they appear to be the sources of stressful environment and poor working culture. This leads the employee quit the industry and hence there is high turnover rate and also the employees become a victim of emotional labour. The researcher would like to view the call centers by means of the metaphorical view of organisation as developed by Gareth Morgan. The metaphorical stance that the researcher would be taking would be that of the psychic prison in which the individuals are trapped and they have the tendency to hold the idea and employee would not be able to conceptualise what needs to be done. In order to carry out the research the researcher has presented the proposal which will be used as a basis for the doctoral thesis.

In the part -I The researcher has carried out the literature review based the available literature and has identified the gap in the literature. Based on the research gap the researcher has presented a conceptual framework on the basis of which the research will be done. Next the research methodologies have been discussed in detail. The researcher will be using the qualitative research method for the research purpose. A detailed discussion has been provided on the data selection, data interpretation , data collection techniques and data analysis and management , validity and reliability of the data and finally the ethical consideration and limitation of the research. The final section the researcher has presented

the expected conclusion that the researcher determines to be expected outcome of the research

In the part -2 the researcher has presented the reflective essay on the using the qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Part – 1

The psychic Prison - Metaphorical View of the call centers: A

Qualitative Study on the Indian call centers

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background :

In the current century, the call center plays an important role in providing customer services to several industries. These call centers offer customer service through inbound calls and sales to customers by means of outbound calls. Numerous industries depend on call centers to address customer issues namely billing inquiries, technical enquires, etc. Even though the call centers are significant for organisations to manage their customer base there is no change in the industry over these years. The call center employees or the call center agents suffer the pressure in the environment due to continuous monitoring, less job satisfaction, no or less motivation, and high stress. The agents are also given low compensation and almost nil progression in their career.

1.2 Research Problem :

The call centers are typically said to be driven by technology. They can also be referred to as a result of combining computer systems which are used by the trained call center agents in order to assist customer daily. The call centers look like the sweatshop in industries which involves very congested working environment for the call center agents. The agents work on their computers throughout the day under very tight and meticulous surroundings. The agents work on irregular time zones and shift pattern in order to provide customer service

(Chowdhury, et al., 2012, p.47). These constrained working conditions in the call center can be related to the organisational metaphor of psychic prison as proposed by Gareth Morgan.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives :

The aim of this research is twofold. Firstly, to carry out a study on the call centers in India and analyse the environment, working culture of the employees . Secondly to analyse the industry through the metaphorical view of Psychic Prison proposed by Gareth Morgan.

The research focusses on answering the following research questions :

RQ1 : What are the challenges and issues faced by the call center employees ?

RQ2 : Are call center employees finding it tough to consider other way of conceptualising how they might do things ?

RQ3 : Are the call center employees entombed in a chosen system of thinking in order to maintain harmony, which confines creativity, forbids change and bounds their ability to progress into the future.?

The following are the objectives of the research answer the research questions:

- Examine the call center working culture. Identify the issues faced by the call center employees daily in terms of the shift time, call handling, performance metrics.
- Identify the barriers for the agents in terms of career progression, work life balance, job satisfaction.
- Examine why the call center industry has a high attrition/ turnover rate when compared to the other industries.
- Examine whether the call center industry are psychic prison as proposed by Gareth Morgan where the employees are confined to their working environment and do not conceptualise the outside world.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction :

In this chapter, the literature review is presented with the available literature that relates to the objective of the research. The literature review also highlights the issues and problems to examine the fact critically and the gap in the literature is identified. Also, a framework is established based on the identified research gap.

2.2 Pre- conceptual framework for the study:

The researcher has framed the pre-conceptual framework in order to carry out the literature review. This pre-conceptual framework will help in understanding the gaps in the literature and help in developing the conceptual framework for the research. The below figure 2.1 shows the pre-conceptual framework used by researcher for the initial literature review.

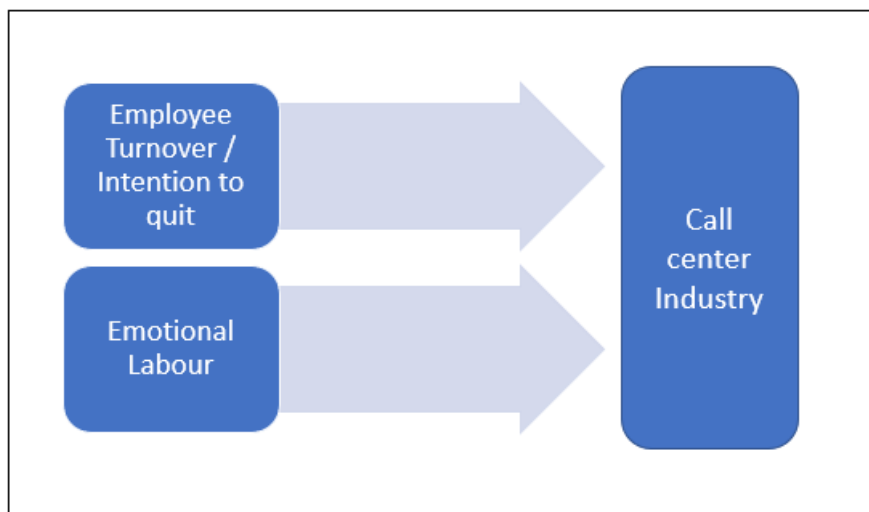


Figure : 2.1 Pre- conceptual framework.

2.3 Call center Industry :

The call center industry is a fast-growing industry internationally and they have become business sources to enable communication with customers by sharing information (inbound) or by telesales (outbound). The call centers pave way as an alternate way of communication in between the organisation and customers by which means the high cost incurred by face to face and one to one communication is eliminated. Call centers caters a wide variety of services which includes resolving customer issues and complaints and providing information to the customers. (Miller & Hendrickse, 2016, p.51). Though the call centers help companies by means of the cost and generate huge profits, the job characteristics and the working condition of the employees including their wellbeing in the call centers are not much emphasised. According to Miller & Hendrickse (2016) “ The call centre industry has suffered from a poor reputation of low pay, monotonous work, high job demand, low control, limited social support and few opportunities for participating and acquiring new skills and training (Miller & Hendrickse, 2016, p.51). The call center agents work in an atmosphere in which the procedures are scripted based on which the performance is tracked. This working culture is often referred to as the “ Tayloristic production lines “ (Peaucelle, 2000, p.465)

2.4 Characteristics of Job in call centers :

In the call centers the agents are prone to have scarcity in autonomy over their tasks and their job environment. They do not have the option over the methods and procedure they use and how they complete the task and more time allocated for their work. The work in the call centers tend to be more repetitive and they do not have the option to set their own goals. In the inbound call center where the customer calls the call center to solve their query, the target based on which the call center agents need to achieve rely on the average handling time of the call and abandoned call rate. (Dean & Rainnie, 2009,p.330). The agents are monitored on number of calls they handle in a day and way in which the calls are handled. In the call center industry regardless of the sector where the support is provided like banking , telecom, product

support , technical support etc the agents are exposed to pressure right from the start of their shift until the end of the day. The stringent performance metrics play a vital role in the stressful work environment that are followed in the call center industry. When the agent receives a call from the customer the call needs to answer within the stipulated time. The agents should ensure that the call needs to be answered in a polite way. The call centers ensures that the agents answer the call with the smile. Call centers also have metrics for the call duration which insists that agents finish the customer call in stipulated time. The other metrics that are followed in certain call center is that the customer query is handled and provide first call resolution to customer query. First call resolution means that the customer must not call the call center for the same enquiry again. In case the customer calls for the same query, then the performance of the call center agent is questioned(Dean & Rainnie, 2009,p.332). The agents also need to handle irate customer in a calm and composed manner. The agents are forced to regulate the feelings and expression when handling call. This makes them a victim of emotional labour. The call center also work on time schedules. This means that the agents are required to take the break in the stipulated time and as per the schedule. The staggered schedule is maintained due the service level and ensure that there are no customer calls in queue

However, on the other hand the outbound call centers, where the agents call the customer in order to carry out sales related operations. In outbound call centers the main purpose of the agents is to market and sell products to customer by means of the tele calling. The outbound call center agents who are called telemarketers need to follow a script in order to complete the sale for the customer. This script includes explaining the feature of the product /. Service that is been sold. Often the stress experienced by the outbound call center agents are referred to that of the radio announcers. (Chowdhury, et al., 2012,p.50)

2.5 Emotional labour in call centers :

The emotional labour was created by sociologist Arlie Hochschild in the year 1983. Emotional labour is described as controlling a person's behaviour in order to display suitable emotions within situations, which means that an individual's emotions are suppressed or not expressed for the conforming social norms. (Akanji, 2014). The customer service roles expect friendliness and courtesy which can be interpreted rules of regulated feelings (Kinnan, 2009, p.118). The customers calling the call center do not have any idea whether the call center agents are interacting with them with a smiling face or not hence the agents are trained to smile down the phone or in other words exhibit emotions positively through the tone of their voice. (Danielle Van Jaarsveld, 2013, p.155). When compared with other frontline workplaces that offer services to customer, the call centers use of information and communication technology in terms of performance monitoring which includes call handling, after call work time, compliance in terms of using scripts and the customer satisfaction index ratings are very intense. Also, the agents are subjected to constant monitoring by the managers by means of listening to calls and providing feedback to the agents on their performance. In such an atmosphere which has extreme levels of control and the agents interact with the customer at regular basis than any other service industry involves emotional labour. This is main reason why the call center agents are under pressure as they tend to show lesser negative emotions. (Danielle Van Jaarsveld, 2013, p.156).

2.6 Turnover in call centers :

As discussed in the previous section, the call centers act as a bridge between the customer and organisation. However, on the other hand the turnover in the call center are also on the higher in the industry. The high pressure and very stressful working atmosphere are due to the monotonous work, non-existence of control and the extent to which the agents are monitored constantly by electronic means and target achievement. This leads to high turnover rate in the call centers. (Imtiazhossain, et al., 2018, p.8). According to Mwendwa & Gitonga, (

2017) training and development, rewards management, characteristics of the job , manager or supervisor support and the career growth in the call centers influence the turnover of call center agents. The other reasons for employee turnover in the call centers are low compensation, unfavourable working conditions both physically and interpersonally. Also the agents in general do not quit the call center due to lack of skills or inability to perform their job, they leave the of the disinterest and the lack of personal characteristics in order to be successful and they are not satisfied with the atmosphere they work (Chowdhury, et al., 2012, p.48). The other factors that impact the turnover of the call center agents include poor work life balance, absence of personal and emotional engagement. (Imtiazhossain, et al., 2018, p.9). Performance metrics that are followed in the call center portray a supremacy of stopwatches in which the performance of an agents are analysed by mean of number of calls handled by the agents in an hour and also in a day on which the monthly performance of an agent is measured. (Marr & Neely, 2004)

2.7 The Psychic Prison : Metaphorical view of the organisations :

The images of organisation by using the metaphors was developed by Gareth Morgan in 1986. The metaphors are used to communicate the comprehensive and intangible concepts like that of the organisation's strategy and mission and when there is a need for the innovative concepts. Using metaphors helps to create a picture of object under study. (Itkin & Nagy, 2014, p.38) The psychic prisons are metaphor used by Morgan in order to view the organisations. According to Gazendam (1993) "organizations are socially constructed realities based on unconscious preoccupations of people in the organization. These socially constructed realities or cultures may be experienced as problematic and confining "(Gazendam, 1993). The organisations are sustained and created consciously and subconsciously, and the employees become confined or rather trapped by mind maps. Morgan confirms that the humans tend to get caught in the traps that have been developed. (Itkin & Nagy, 2014, p.38) The organisations have a grip on the ideas of the employees which makes them difficult to conceptualise on

what needs to be done. The employees are prisoners of their own ideas. The organisations are tangled in their own actions and thoughts. The metaphor depicts the way in which an organisation are entombed in a thinking style. This thinking style chosen to ensure the maintenance of peace in the organisation. Such organisations tend to be a creativity barrier and they confine change which leads to limited progression. Young (2013) proposes the following behaviour of organisations that are trapped under the metaphor of psychic prison.

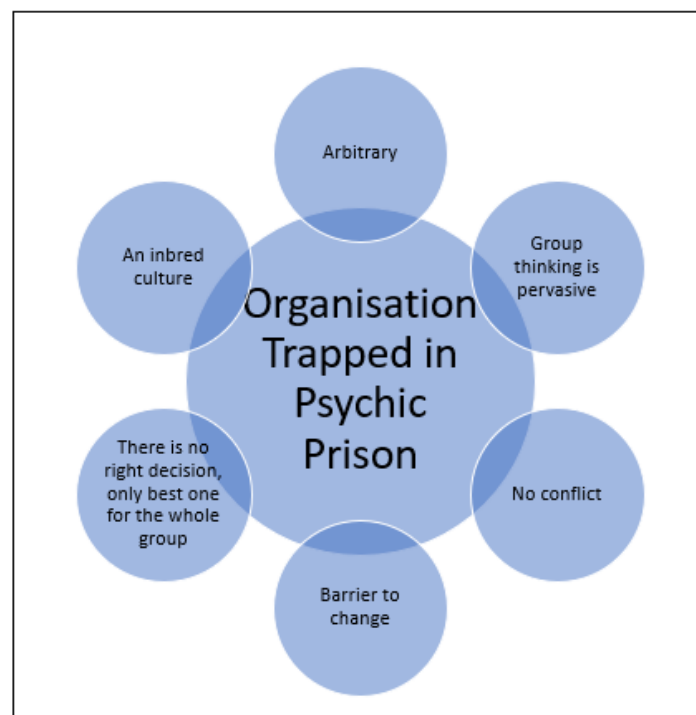


Figure 2.2 : Behaviour of organisations trapped in Psychic Prison Young (2019)

It is a tendency for human begins to conform. In the psychic prison organisations, the team members obey. They do not change their thinking and accept the group thinking, follow the ideas and process which are challenged or questioned. The group thinking in these organisations are a way to maintain amity, however on the other hand maintaining harmony does not lead to productivity . As there Is group thinking within the organisation there is less or no conflict when its decision making it considered. Most of the choices are made by the top management and the employees have no voice in such decisions. (Young, 2013) When the top management are involved in all decisions, they do not have the tendency to understand

the problem faced by the employees which results in barrier to change. Only when the management know about the problem the employees face, there would be a scope for a change. As there is barrier or resistance to change there is no right or wrong decision and only one best decision for the whole group prevails in the organisations. The organisation entangled in the psychic prison metaphorical view follow the inbred culture when the performance management is considered. The promotions in these organisations are given to employees based on their experience in the organisation rather than the performance. And finally, in these organisations the arbitrary culture is prevalent, which mean that the top management are the decision maker and their order needs to follow irrespective whether they are correct or incorrect. (Young, 2013)

2.8 Identified Gap in literature :

There are numerous literatures on the call center industry and call centers that focus on the employee attrition, factors that impact turnover of employees, call center management and employee wellbeing in call center. However, the researcher identified the gap in literature where there is no literature available to view the call centers through the metaphorical view of the psychic prison. In order to fill the gap, the researcher has proposed a framework with the metaphorical view of the call centers. The below conceptual framework has been proposed by the researcher in order to carry out the research.

2.9 Conceptual Framework :

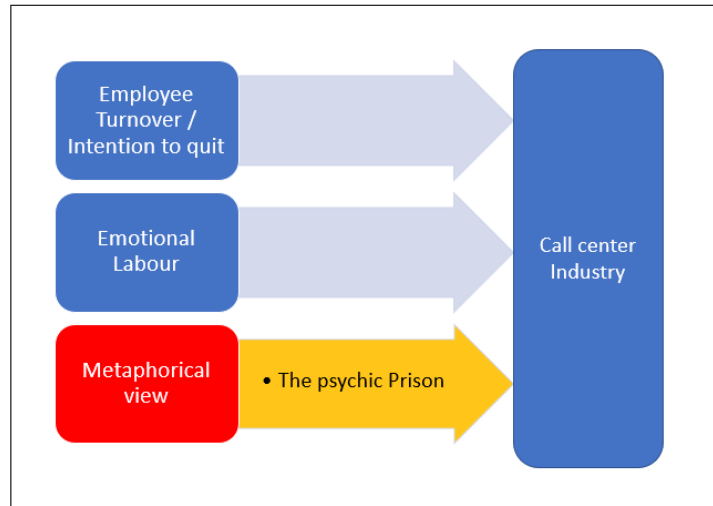


Figure 2.3 : Conceptual Framework -The Psychic Prison: Metaphorical view of the call center

The above figure displays the new conceptual framework on which the research will be carried out by the researcher. The call center will be seen by the researcher using the metaphorical view on the psychic prison and the data collected will be analysed by the researcher.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction :

Research is defined as the “ *the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusion*” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2019). According to Kothari (2004) “*Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically*”(Kothari, 2004, p.8). Generally, research methodology is the study on how the research process is carried out in a organised way to resolve the research problem. The researcher will be using various tools, processes and techniques in the research. These processes are called the research methods.

In this chapter the research methodology that will be adopted by the researcher for the research is presented.

3.2 Research Questions :

The following are the research questions that are guided in the research

RQ1 : What are the challenges and issues faced by the call center employees ?

RQ2 : Are call center employees finding it tough to consider other way of conceptualising how they might do things ?

RQ3 : Are the call center employees entombed in a chosen system of thinking in order to maintain harmony, which confines creativity, forbids change and bounds their ability to progress into the future.?

3.3 Purpose of research and the research design :

The main purpose of this qualitative research is to view the call center through the metaphorical perspective of Psychic prison. As discussed previously working in the call center, the agents are subjected high pressure and stressful environment. Though there are quite a lot of study conducted previously on the nature of call center and the issues pertaining to call centers such as turnover, employee wellbeing etc. The researcher has found that the call centers are not viewed through the metaphorical view of psychic prison. By conducting the research on the perceptions of call center agents with regards to the metaphorical view, the researcher hopes to add a significant content to the research on the topic.

The implementation of this research has a lot of significance to encompass the existing literature and knowledge on the call center industry and viewing the call centers as a psychic prison. Intensifying the data on various notions of the call center industry and the metaphorical view this research could improve the significance of how the call center industries are viewed. The results of the study may be used as to provide a guidance for the management in the call center industry to refine the methods and procedure in order to improve the working environment for the call center agents.

The researcher has proposed to use the qualitative research for the purpose of study. An inductive approach is used for the qualitative research as the researcher has focused on the research questions in order to narrow the research scope. Also, the inductive research allows the researcher to create an opportunity for exploring data and creating an understanding. This helps in building the concepts, theories and thoughts rather than test the theories that are in existence. The inductive process will help the researcher to build and in depth understanding of the call center industry and its perception on the metaphorical view. The qualitative research methods that will be used for the research will facilitate in exploring the phenomenon based on the context by means of data sources which ensures that the problem is seen through various lenses in order to divulge and comprehend the phenomenon.

3.4 Research Philosophy :

According to Saunders, et al (2009, p124) “*The term research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge*” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p.124). It is very vital for the researcher to adopt the suitable research philosophy as main objective of the research is to answer the research question that is develop a new bit of knowledge in the field. The research process is cyclic and there are numerous assumptions made in each stage of the process. The assumptions made at every stage will help the researcher in determining the appropriate research strategy and methods that can be used in the research.

There are numerous research philosophies and are different from each other based on their assumptions. Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology are the significant assumptions which distinguish the research philosophies. (Saunders, et al., 2009, p.127)

Saunders, et al (2009, p127) “*Ontology refers to assumptions about the nature of reality*” (Saunders, et al, 2009, p127). It describes how the researcher perceives and studies the research objects.

Epistemology refers to the assumptions that made about the knowledge and which knowledge is constituted acceptable, genuine and how the knowledge is communicated. (Saunders, et al, 2009, p127).

While on the other hand axiology is concerned with the values and ethical consideration in the process of research. (Saunders, et al, 2009, p127).

The five main research philosophies that are significant for the research in business and social sciences are positivism, interpretivism, critical realism, post modernism and Pragmatism (Saunders, et al, 2009, p122).

3.4.1 Proposed Research Philosophy for the research

As the researcher will be carrying out a qualitative research the best philosophy is the interpretivism.

3.4.2 Interpretivism :

The research philosophy of the interpretivism emerged in the 20th century. Its emphasis on the fact that the human being vary from the phenomenon physically as they create meanings. And these meaning are studied by the interpretivists. On an epistemological stance an interpretivist believes that the human cannot be separated from the study or research and therefore there lies a relationship between the research and the researcher. This clearly shows that the philosophy of interpretivism was developed as a criticism for the positivistic approach. The significant role of the interpretivist approach is that to develop an in-depth knowledge and the interpretation of the social reality. Hence this approach is bound by values and thus follows an inductive approach. The inductive approach is an approach in which the research shifts from specific observation to generic ideas. The research methods that are commonly used in this research methods are structure and semi structured interviews. (Saunders, et al, 2009, p140).

3.4.3 Proposed Research strategies for the research

There are many research strategies that are available in order to conduct the interpretive research approach namely, experiments, surveys, case studies, ethnography, grounded theory, action research and archival research. The researcher has proposed to use the ethnographic strategy for the research purpose.

3.4.4 Ethnography : Ethnography is a methodology that is used in qualitative research to study the beliefs, social interactions and the behaviours of people from smaller society. The ethnographic study involves participation and observation by the researcher over a period and

then interpret the data collected. In this methodology the researcher is a participant and has the advantage of being engrossed in the culture over a period and therefore they are in a position where they can find the hidden context. (Naidoo, 2012, p.2). The aim of the ethnographic study is to give a meaning for the culture that is under research. The most valuable features of ethnographic research are the depth. As the researcher is there for a prolonged period, the ethnographer understands what individuals are doing and what they say they are doing. Over a period of time , the researcher can acquire a thorough understanding of the people, the organization, and the larger framework within which they work. By carrying out an ethnographic study, researcher develops a friendly acquaintance with the problems, hindrances, practices, associations, and hazards that are part of everyday life. The significance of ethnography is that it is the most detailed or thorough research method possible. The process of ethnographical study involves collecting data by means of field notes, audio and visual material , journals and cultural artefacts. The data are analysed by means of coding and referencing. The data collected are then supported by means of techniques such as an interview which involves individually or in groups or just through an informal conversation. (Naidoo, 2012, p.3)

The researcher will be carrying out the ethnographic study in the call centers to ensure that they understand the criticalities of the job role and the job environment. Also, the researcher believes that the data collected by mean of carrying out the ethnography study are genuine.

3.5 Research accessibility and Sampling:

In this section the researcher will be describing the population for the research, the participant selection and the sources of data. The researcher will be carrying out the research in two call centers in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Both the call centers provide customer service to different sectors. One call center provides the telephone banking service for a reputed bank in India and the other provides technical support to leading computer manufacturing company.

The researcher aims to conduct interviews with the call center agents to understand their working culture and the working environment. In order to understand the study in the call center the researcher has chosen two call centers in different sectors and aims to compare their working culture and finally try to understand whether the call industry irrespective of the sector are a psychic prison for the agents. Also, the researcher would be conducting few interviews with agents who have quit their jobs as call center agent and have chosen an entirely different field of occupation. This will help the researcher to clearly carry out the research to analyse the metaphorical view of the call centers.

Gaining access to carry out an ethnographical research would not be an issue for the researcher as they have been working in the call centers and have their close acquaintances who are the researcher's ex-colleagues through whom the permission can be obtained.

Sampling process plays a vital role in qualitative study this is because the selection of effects the research quality. There are three different types of sampling method namely, selective, purposeful sampling and theoretical sampling. (Coyne, 1997,p,624) . It is suggested that in selective sampling the researcher will be able to ascertain who to sample after a lot of observation visiting to the sites. The researches will discuss sampling based on time, locations events and people. When sampling people they explain that the sampling is done based on the research aims. The categories for selective sampling depend on age, sex, role and function in an organisation. However, on the other hand the purposeful sampling technique lies in the context of learning in depth about the research problem in line with the purpose of the research. Theoretical sampling has its roots with the invention of the grounded theory. The theoretical sampling can thus be defined as the data collection process mainly for the purpose of developing theory the researcher collects code and carries out analysis of his data and makes a decision as to which data they want to collect the next time and where to find them. (Coyne, 1997,p.626)

3.6 Data Selection :

There are two types of data that can be collected in a research. The primary data and the secondary data. The primary data comprises of data that are mostly in basic and in the uncomplicated form. These data are mostly referred to as a raw data which do not influence or have not been edited by the researcher . Primary data is converted to secondary data when the researcher does something on it. The secondary data is also referred to as processed data which could a mixture of data that are recoded, characterised or picturised. The secondary data are the data that are mostly transferred to the world outside on basis of the subject and domain in the form of publications. (Tjalsma & Rombouts, 2011, p.13)

3.7 Data Collection techniques for qualitative research:

There are many data collection techniques that can be used to carry out a qualitative research. However, for the purpose of the current research the researcher will be carrying out interviews. Interview method is one of the most significant and beneficial data collecting practices for the qualitative research. An interview is discussion which involves exchange of words amidst two people. These two people can be considered as an interviewer and an interviewee. The interviewer plans the interview in a prearranged way with the intent of procuring valuable data about their area of research from the interviewee. Myers (2009, p.123) Interviews is a useful technique various reasons : they are vital in obtaining information on a specific subject, receiving responses about compound problems, gaining responses as well as feelings, and probing subtle information. When conducting an interview, the interviewer needs to focus on two areas a) to follow individual line of investigation, and 2) ensure that the questions are unbiased which in turn services the researcher's motive of the research. Myers (2009, p.123) states that there are Three main kinds of interview methods namely : structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews.

According to (Myers, 2009) structured interviews include the use of pre-formulated questions, that are asked to the interviewee in a particular order by the interviewer and these are

sometimes time bound. Semi-structured interviews comprise the use of some pre-formulated questions, however with no restriction. New questions may develop during the discussion which could lead to improvisation. Lastly, the unstructured interviews involve the use of a very limited preformulated questions. They might or might not be time bound and interviewees have the freedom to say anything they wanted.

3.8 Data Collection :

Irrespective of the data collection method the process involves generating large amount of data. Adding to the available methodologies there are various ways in which the information said by an interviewee during an interview can be recorded. Like taking handwritten notes or recording the video. (Sutton & Austin 2015, p.227). According to Sutton & Austin (2015) “ If the researcher is audio- or video-recording data collection, then the recordings must be transcribed verbatim before data analysis can begin. As a rough guide, it can take an experienced researcher/transcriber 8 hours to transcribe one 45-minute audio-recorded interview, a process that will generate 20–30 pages of written dialogue.” (Sutton & Austin 2015, p.227). Researcher also tends to maintain folders of the notes that were taken during the field visits in order to complement the audio recordings. The field notes assist the researcher in maintaining and commenting on the impressions, the context of environment, actions and nonverbal which may not be precisely noted by means of the recording. They are usually written in hand during time of the interview. The field notes helps in providing valuable insight to the understanding of the data that is audio taped and help them to remember the situations that may be information while analysing the data. The field notes does not need to be formal, however they need to maintained and safeguarded in the similar way in which the audio recordings are preserved as they contain sensitive and confidential data needed for the research. (Sutton & Austin, 2015, p.227)

3.8.1 Proposed data selection and data collection techniques for the Research

In the previous sections, a detailed discussion has been made of the data selection, data collection techniques that are generally used for the interpretivist approach. The researcher would be collecting the primary data by conducting semi structured interviews with the call center agents and record their responses. Conducting interviews with the call center agents will cover the aspect of understanding the working nature of agent in the call center and get a clear idea of whether the agents view the call center through the metaphor of psychic prison. Though the researcher does not expect all the participants to understand the metaphorical view of call center, the researcher intends to prepare the semi structured interview questions in way that the call center agents can understand the metaphorical view in better way. The researcher feels that making the agents understand is vital in order to get genuine response from the participant. The researcher will be carrying out a similar methods of data collection by taking field notes and audio taping the conversation with the participants. The researcher will be interviewing the participants one by one in order to maintain confidentiality of data. The interviews will be audio taped and field notes will be taken in order to record even the slightest emotions that are displayed by the call center agents. As metaphorical view of researching the call is first of its kind the researcher expects that the agent might take a long time than expected to provide their responses.

3.9 Interpretation of data :

The data interpretation depends on the theoretical stance that has been taken by the researcher. For instance, the title of the research ***“The psychic prison : Metaphorical view of call centers: Qualitative study on the Indian call centers ”*** indicates two theoretical stances, firstly the metaphorical view of the call center as psychic prison and secondly the qualitative study on the Indian call centers . For the first stance it can be deduced to have definitive idea to conduct the research, the researcher must have felt that there was an effect

on the call centers to be viewed as an psychic prison and with respect to the second standpoint, it can be deduced that the researcher will be using an inductive approach because qualitative studies follow an inductive approach in the research methodology. This can be reflected in other words; individuals do things for the outlooks of those in their world or in the broader culture in which they are living. Thus, the two stances that have been mentioned will have an effect in the methods the researcher will interpret the experiences of the participants namely the call center agents. Sutton & Austin,(2015) says that “ Being aware of the standpoints you are taking in your own research is one of the foundations of qualitative work. Without such awareness, it is easy to slip into interpreting other people’s narratives from your own viewpoint, rather than that of the participants.” (Sutton & Austin, 2015,p.227).

3.9.1 Transcribing and checking the data

Transcribing of the data is a process to convert conversation to written form in order to carry out the process of data analysis. The tapings should be recorded precisely as it needs to be again read. The lines written must be numbered. Upon completion of the transcript , the researcher shall read it along the recording is played and perform steps of : spell check if any or mistakes in any other form , make the transcript anonymous which ensures that participant remains confidential from whatever that is communicated which includes demographic details and confidential information. Representations for pauses, laugh , enjoyment, discomfort looks, emotions and finally punctuations need to be inserted. (Sutton & Austin, 2015, p.128)

3.9.2 Reading in between the line :

During the procedure of transcribing , the researcher can start to have an impression for the participant’s involvement of the concept in study and may start to contemplate about matters that could be followed in forth coming interviews when required. In such way, a participant’s chronicle notifies the following, and the researcher can continuously interview till they reached the saturation point where nothing is heard (Sutton & Austin, 2015,p.228).

. (Sutton & Austin, 2015) suggests that a “qualitative research method known as interpretative phenomenological analysis, “ where there are two beliefs first, that it is deep-rooted in phenomenology, attempts to comprehend the sense that people attribute to their life experiences, and next, that the researcher ensure that they try to infer this sense in the meaning of the research. It should also be noted that the researcher has rough awareness and proficiency in the theme of the research which means that they will have substantial opportunity to interpret the experiences of the participants “ (Sutton & Austin, 2015,p.228).

3.9.3 Coding and Theming

Upon completion of transcribing and checking the research interviews, the next process is coding. Collected field notes throughout an interview may be a beneficial source of material to enable the coding procedure, there will be a time frame available between the interview and transcribing process and in such cases coding can effect in memory favouritism concerning nonverbal or ecological setting problems that might affect data interpretation. Coding is a process of identifying themes, problems, resemblances, and variances that are exposed by the participants accounts and interpreted by the researcher. This procedure allows the researcher to commence in understanding the society from each participants standpoint. Coding may be done manually on a paper print of the transcript, noting in the sides by means of naming text sections . (Sutton & Austin, 2015,p.228).

There are always queries on the trustworthiness of the interpretation and illustration of the participants descriptions in qualitative research . Like in the quantitative research the qualitative does not have statistical test to check the trustworthiness and validity of the data. The integrity of the coding process can be checked by asking another scholar to code the same record and then carry out discussion on the similarities and differences in the two coding methods .This process can ensure that final revisions made to the codes can aid to clarifying and confirming research findings. (Sutton & Austin, 2015,p.228).

Theming denotes the process of illustrating the codes together from transcripts to reproduce the results of qualitative research in an eloquent and meaningful way . The process of theming is significant at the conclusion, as it will be probable to represent the data from the interviews within quotes from the specific transcripts to show the source and thus, when the results are prepared for thesis , every theme can be the title of a section in the thesis. (Sutton & Austin, 2015,p.229).

The researcher will be following the above guidelines for interpreting the data using transcribing, checking , coding and theming methods for all the interviews that will be conducted.

3.10 Data Analysis and Management :

Data analysis is the defined as the process of applying systematically the statistical and/or logical methods to define, demonstrate, summarise, outline, and assess data. Qualitative research involves taking position of another person and looking at the world from their perspectives. Sutton & Austin,(2015) says that “ the most important part of data analysis and management is to be true to the participants. It is their voices that the researcher is trying to hear, so that they can be interpreted and reported on for others to read and learn from” (Sutton & Austin, 2015, p.227).

There are several approaches that are present for qualitative data analysis. However, the researcher who carry out qualitative research often tend to choose one approach for the purpose of data analysis and ensure that they hold on to it. The first reason is that some data analysis approaches are fixed to the philosophical stance which the researchers would be interested to avoid due to the difficulties of mixing the methods. Secondly, the description of alternate forms of qualitative data analysis is a comparatively new phenomenon in qualitative management research. The reason why the documenting of methods has happened is owing to the necessity for qualitative researchers to have some trustworthiness linked with their logical method. (Cassell & Bishop, 2019, p.195)

3.11 Reliability and validity of the research :

Reliability is a concept that is used to test or evaluate quantitative research however, the context of reliability is used in all kinds of research. In a qualitative research the focus lies on the quality when testing is concerned. Eisner(1991) says that “ A good qualitative study can help us understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (Eisner, 1991, p. 58). According to Stenbacka, (2001) “the concept of reliability is even misleading in qualitative research. If a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good” (Stenbacka, 2001, p.552), However on the other hand it is necessary for a researcher who is carrying out a qualitative study to concentrate on reliability and validity when designing the research, when analysing the result and more over when examining the research quality. In qualitative research the reliability of the research is ensured by examining the trustworthiness. This examination of trustworthiness is very critical (Golafshani, 2003,p.601)

Validity in qualitative research can be explained in various contexts. Some qualitative researchers have argued that the concept of validity is not essential in the qualitative research, there has always been a requirement of certain form of qualifying measure for the research.

The researcher will consider the methods of examining the validity and reliability of the research upon completion of the research.

3.12 Ethical consideration in the research :

As the research includes conducting interviews ethical considerations will be considered to protect the rights of the participants. According to Trochim (2006) “The principle of Confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation and right to service will be followed and maintained throughout the research. (Trochim,2006). Hence it is important responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the ethical code of conduct is followed along with the confidentiality ,truthfulness is maintained throughout the research process.

The researcher will be following the ethical procedures of University of Wales Trinity Saint David for all the activities that will be conducted as a part of the research. The ethics form will be submitted to the University's ethics committee before carrying out the research.

The researcher will also be providing information sheet for the participant detailing the aim and objectives of the study along with the assurance that the information that they share will be held confidential and that the data collected will be only for academic purpose will be emphasised. The participant information sheet will also have the researcher's contact details and that of the researcher's supervisor will be provided to each participant. The voluntary participation of the participants will be mentioned in the information sheet. The ethical implications for the participants of the semi-structured interviews will be also be considered and the data will be collected in accordance with University of Wales Trinity Saint David's ethical regulation. Also, the participant consent form will be collected, and the all data collected will be stored in password protected drive provided by the university. Also, during the process of compilation of the thesis the researcher will be acknowledging the data sources by using the Harvard referencing system as the university's guideline in order to prevent plagiarism.

3.13 Limitation of the research :

Though the researcher will be carrying out the research in India, could be limitation from the participants in cooperating with the interview as they may fear to provide any information due to the job environment and their working style. Even if the researcher will be collecting data by means of the semi structured interviews there are not practical way to ensure the honesty of the interviewees while answering the interview questions. Also, before conducting the interviews the researcher should make sure that the questions are precise and easily understandable which enable to interviewees to figure out the extract meaning of the question. However, there is not specific way in which the researcher will be able to ascertain the fact the participants will understand the question just in the same way the researcher will want

them to understand. This could possibility result in the participants might provide answers that might deviate from the actual reality.

4. Expected Conclusions

In this section the researcher will be presenting the expected conclusion for the research. Based on the literature that the researcher has carried out it is evident that the call centers are industry where the agents are subjected to high work pressure, stressful environment and the call centers also have very strict performance metric that makes their job even more severe. However as discussed in the research gap section there are not sufficient literature on the metaphorical view of the call center hence the researcher will not be able to present the expected out comes by mean of graphical representation.

However, based on the literature cited in the literature review section on the researcher can analyse the organisations that are trapped in the psychic prison and the call center industry. The characteristics of both the industry are the same based on available literature which the researcher like to emphasise that the call center are also organisation that are trapped in the psychic prison metaphor. However, the actual conclusion can be presented by the researcher upon conducting the semi-structured interviews with the call center agent.

PART -II

Reflective Essay

I have had an opportunity to study both the qualitative a quantitative research method as a part of the Doctor of Business Administration journey. I take the opportunity to compare the quantitative and qualitative research methods with my own experience that I had while writing my assignment

My quantitative study was on the **Factors that impact attrition in Indian call centers**. In this quantitative study I designed the questionnaire that was administered to the individual who were my ex-colleagues from a couple of call center while I was working in India. The questionnaire that twelve questions as it was pilot study. The questionnaire was sent to 35 respondents and I received 30 duly completed questionnaire for the purpose of the study. Initially I was very glad to have got all the 30 completed questionnaires on the same day however while doing the data analysis it was very difficult for me to analyse the data as there was no consistency in the responses given by the respondents. This clearly showed that respondents have not been honestly responding to the survey and have done it just for the name sake. Also, there was questioned that raised in my mind whether did the participants read the full questionnaire while answering or have just replied randomly.

However, when it come to the qualitative research, I hope I will not face such a problem as I will be meeting the individuals personally and carry out the interviews. I feel that when there is emotional bond between the interviewer and the interviewee the responses will be genuine and honest. On the other hand, the qualitative research could be tedious as the interviewees may initially be hesitant to openly talk about their job environment and the working culture due to the fear of termination or any other actions that they fear may be taken by the top management.

On comparing both the research methods the qualitative research methods is found to be an easy one as I as a researcher can place myself in the interviewee's position while carrying out an ethnographic study and understand their daily traits. This might also help me to develop the rapport between the participants. In the qualitative research study, I can explain the stance that I am taking as a researcher and how their responses will be of great assistance to my study. I will also get an opportunity to explain my career path to them from call center agent to a managerial position and make them feel at ease during the interviews. I found that the qualitative study is easier than the quantitative because while doing the assignment I did not get an opportunity to talk to the respondents what I am expecting out of the responses, though there was a short write up about my assignment, I guess that the respondents did not find time to read it. As it was clear from the responses and the lack in consistency of the responses.

I would surely prefer qualitative research method for my doctoral thesis as the topic that I will be doing metaphorical view of call centers – the psychic prison is completely a qualitative topic and no quantitative. Even an attempt to make the topic quantitative will affect the data that needs to be collected from the respondents . Because not all respondent will be aware of the phrase metaphorical view, in case I do a quantitative research, I am sure I will not be able to fulfil my research aim and objectives. Moreover, the topic of such a kind requires the researcher to personally be present to capture the emotions of the respondents. Hence, I will be carrying out the qualitative research for the doctoral thesis. Initially to be honest I was very sceptical about the qualitative method when compared to the quantitative and wanted to do my doctoral thesis by following a mixed method of using both the quantitative and qualitative however I had to change my perception after completing the module and also after the assignment for the module.

When the similarities and differences of both the methods are considered, the main purpose of the qualitative research is to discover the meaning of individual's experience and how they

see the problem or the issue. However, the quantitative emerges as the relation between dependant and independent variable.

Also, when the doctoral thesis is concerned conducting a quantitative research may be very tedious as there will be lot of number involved and lot of variable involved and also the target population will be also large.

In the qualitative research the researcher needs to develop the research questions based on the research problem and objectives of the researcher. Whereas in the quantitative the researcher needs to formulate hypothesis based on the dependant and independent variable and carry out the analysis. Qualitative research methods allow the researcher to explore the ideas by asking simple questions and thereby exploring the views of the participants on the contrary to the quantitative where there the research is carried out on basis of prediction

Thus, reflective essay has been presented at the end of I can clearly and confidently say that qualitative research methods will be my choice for my doctoral research,

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