

Knowledge of Business Process Outsourcing Agents on Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV, Manila Philippines

Oruga, Myra D., MPH*

Faculty of Management and Development Studies, University of the Philippines Open University, Bgy Maahas UP Los Banos,

Abstract

Knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV and its association to demographic and socio-economic profiles of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) agents was explored in this cross sectional study. A total of 50 BPO agents participated. An adapted questionnaire was utilized to inquire the knowledge. Validity and reliability were done. Data was process using SPSS ver 21. Results revealed that majority of the respondents are male single, between 21-26 years of age and graduated from public school. Net monthly income varies from 12,000 PHP to 16,000. Majority of the respondents are catholic and are college graduate. Majority of the level of knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV were inadequate. There is an inadequacy of knowledge among BPO agents on the disease and that the associated demographic and socio-economic factors were age, gender, marital status, religious affiliation, type of school and educational attainment.

Key words: HIV/AIDS, BPO agents, level of knowledge, STDs

1. Introduction

Knowledge is an important indicator in measuring the awareness of people on certain issues. In health care this is often use as an evidence based inquiry in conceptualizing health promotion and education strategies. While there are several data published about HIV and sexually transmitted diseases on vulnerable groups in the Philippines, it was found out by the author that there is a scantiness of data focusing on business process outsource (BPO) agents which perceived at the time this paper was written will become the next most vulnerable groups to acquire the disease in the Philippines. This paper attempt to establish a baseline data focusing on this group and it is hope it will contribute and help other researchers to consider in looking the potentiality of studying also this group. Furthermore, this paper seeks to answer the following objectives: Describe the demographic and socio-economic profiles of the respondents; determine the extent of knowledge of respondents on HIV/AIDS/ and sexually transmitted diseases; determine the association of demographic and socio-economic profiles to the knowledge of the respondents on HIV/AIDS/ and sexually transmitted. This study is limited to exploring the demographic profile, socio-economic, level of knowledge and its association to these profiles.

2. Framework

The Philippines is reported to have an increasing trend in the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV cases. The magnitude cut across all ages, high cases are among young adults with age ranging from 15-45 years old according to Department of Health (DOH) data. The National Epidemiology Centre of DOH reported that most cases are males (96%) and median age is 27 years old. The 20-29 years old (61%) had the most number of cases and 58% come from the National Capital Region.

Cacam (2006) narrated that the populations most vulnerable in the Philippines contracted by HIV/AIDS are women, young adults, men having sex with men, sex workers and overseas Filipino workers, this information was similar to the study of Farr and Wilson (2010) included in the list injectable drug users. Baguio (2010) reported that the most alarming group who are in "risky behavior" was BPO agents. University of the Philippines (UP) Population Institute in their unpublished report revealed that for the past 10 months there was an increase of number of young urban professionals affected by HIV/AIDS the study was done among 675 respondents from 22 call centers in Metro Cebu and Metro Manila, they contracted the disease through casual sex. This survey was validated with several BPO agents, that sex become a gaining ground especially among night shift workers.

The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industries in the Philippines are one of the leading contributors to the economic growth and stability in the Philippines. Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) agents on the other hand are the prime mover of the BPO industries it is important therefore to protect their health. Presently there is no research studies focused on this group. The reasons could be one due to the sensitivity of the topic another is it is not a priority group of the health department and third most studies are focused on the co-morbidities of the disease such as HIV and tuberculosis.

In terms of knowledge, there were few published studies focused on these parameters and none in the Philippines have studied these BPO agents. The studies commonly published were always associated to attitude and practices such as the study by Sekireme (2001) where knowledge, attitude and practice about sexually

transmitted diseases among students in Kampala. The level of knowledge about the disease was inadequate. Males had greater sexual partners than female but lower age at first intercourse. School education, peer groups and mass media remain the main ways to which students learn about STD. This was similar to the findings of Rahman et al (2009) where respondents are not aware of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS and more than half of them ever heard of AIDS and that age, years of schooling and knowledge appeared to be predictors of the awareness about AIDS. Aslamangan (2014) where he studied dental students have deficiencies with respect to their knowledge and amount of information received on HIV and AIDS related topics. In contrast to the findings on the study of Hesketh et al (2005) and Chinte et al (2014) the former focused on female sex workers (FSW) where awareness on HIV and STIs and use of condom was generally good, but very poor level of compliance as to condom use while the latter studied adolescent girls where the study revealed that they are knowledgeable about HIV and STDs.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design, Description of Study Participants and Instrumentations

This study utilized a descriptive cross sectional study design. A random sampling was done to a total of 100 regular employees of the 3 BPO companies. Total enumeration was employed however only 50 respondents signified their willingness to participate in the study. Demographic, socio economic profiles and level of knowledge were describe, determine and the association were analyzed. Adapted questionnaires from Survey Instrument Scales that has been designed and tested by CAPS Scientists available free of charge for use by HIV researches, evaluators, prevention program planners were used. Validation was done, and a cronbach's alpha of 0.8 was obtained. An informed consent has been attached to the questionnaire. The research has undergone evaluation from the ethics review committee. Self-administered guided questionnaire was employed. Data was process using SPSS version 21. Frequency and Percentage were used. Level of knowledge was measured using the median point. Those above the median point are considered to have adequate knowledge while below the median point have inadequate knowledge. Spearman's correlation was used to determine the association of demographic and socio-economic profiles to the level of knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Profile of the respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic and socio-economic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, type of school graduated, net monthly income, religious affiliation and educational attainment. Majority of the respondents were male (58%). Culturally in the Philippines males assume the provisions of addressing the basic needs of the households that is contributing to the household source of income, this may be the reason why majority of the respondents are male another reason is the strong preference of male applicants over female by these BPO companies due to security reason; work schedules given to most employees are on a grave yard shift.

Majority were single (82%) and were between 21-26 years. In the Philippines these age group are classified as working age group considered also as "risky groups in terms of acquiring the disease.

Majority of the respondents' graduated from public school (86%). The Philippine government has a very good educational policy whose main priority is accessibility to education by all citizenry. Free education in public schools is one of the provisions. The respondents' net monthly income varies from 12,000 PPhp to 16,000 PPhp which is the regular monthly take home pay of BPO agents at the time the study was conducted. Based on the data of the national economic development authority (NEDA), the net monthly income of BPO agents range from as low as 12,000PPhp to as high as 60,000PPhp.

Majority (42%) of the respondents were catholic, the dominating religion in the Philippines and were college graduate (90%). The high percentage (90%) can be accounted to the fact that BPO companies required college graduate for an applicant to be hired.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of the demographic and socio-economic profiles of the BPO respondents

<i>Profile of the respondents</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A. Demographic Profile		
A.) Gender		
<i>Male</i>	29	58%
<i>Female</i>	21	42%
<i>Total</i>	50	100%
B.) Civil Status		
<i>Single</i>	41	82%
<i>Married</i>	9	18%
<i>Total</i>	50	100%
c.) Age		
<i>21-26</i>	35	70%
<i>27-32</i>	9	18%
<i>33-38</i>	2	4%
<i>39-44</i>	3	6%
<i>45-50</i>	1	2%
<i>Total</i>	50	100%
d.) Type of School Graduated		
<i>Public</i>	43	86%
<i>Private</i>	7	14%
<i>Total</i>	50	100%
B. Socio-Economic Profile		
e.) Net Monthly Income		
<i>12,000-16,000</i>	47	94%
<i>17,000-21,000</i>	2	4%
<i>Above 21,000</i>	1	2%
<i>Total</i>	50	100%
f.) Religious Affiliation		
<i>Catholic</i>	42	84%
<i>Non-Catholic</i>	8	16%
<i>Total</i>	50	100%
g.) Educational Attainment		
<i>College Graduate</i>	45	90%
<i>Undergraduate</i>	4	8%
<i>Vocational</i>	1	2%
<i>Total</i>	50	100%

4.2. Knowledge of BPO agents on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV

Table 2 shows the level of knowledge of BPO agents on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, data revealed that majority (80%) of the BPO agents has inadequate knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV meaning their scores is below the median scores. Majority of the respondents were inadequately knowledgeable about HIV and STDs (Sekireme, 2001). Large portion of respondents are not aware of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS (Rhaman, 2009) and more than half of them ever heard of AIDS (Aslamangan, 2014, Chinte, 2014).

Table 2. Knowledge of BPO agents on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV

Level of Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate	10	20%
Inadequate	40	80%
Total	50	100%

4.3 Association of the demographic and socio-economic profiles to the knowledge of respondents on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV

Association of the demographic and socio-economic profiles to the level of knowledge of respondents on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV was presented in Table 3. Findings of the study revealed that being a young adult or at the middle age is a factor on adequacy or inadequacy of knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. Age is a factor to the awareness of the respondents on sexually transmitted disease and HIV (Rhaman et al, 2009). Corollary to the finding among the socio-economic profiles inquired in the study, net monthly income is not significant to the level of knowledge of the respondents, these means that whether the respondent income was low or high the level of knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV is not affected with the adequacy and inadequacy on the level of knowledge. Gender, marital status, religious affiliation, type of school and educational attainment are significantly associated with the level of knowledge of the BPO agents on sexually transmitted disease and HIV. Huda et. al., (2013) in his study revealed that socio-demographic profiles have an association with the level of knowledge on HIV and STDs among the variables explored were age, type of school and household income. These findings were the same to the study done by Wang et.al. (2013) whereby those enrolled to urban school and have high income showed greater tendency to have high knowledge.

In general the study revealed that demographic as well as socio-economic profiles have positive correlation to the knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases.

Table 3. Association of the demographic and socio-economic profiles to the knowledge of respondents on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV

Knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV	Spearman's Correlation	Significant Level	Interpretation
A. Demographic Profile			
Gender	0.800	p<0.05	Significant
Marital Status	14.00	p<0.05	Significant
Age	17.24	P<0.05	significant
B. Socio Economic Profile			
Net Monthly income	23.90	p>0.05	Not Significant
Religious Affiliation	0.750	p<0.05	Significant
Type of School Graduated	30.23	p<.05	Significant
Educational Attainment	23.00	p<.05	Significant

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

HIV and STDs among BPO agents in the Philippines are not reported because of the sensitivity of issue what is commonly reported were those in the vulnerable group such as MSMs (men having sex with men) , women, etc. The study primary intention was to contribute and help by establishing a baseline data on this potential vulnerable group so that other researchers with similar interest can use it to further investigate the topic.

The paper delved on the association of the demographic and socio-economic factors were age, gender, marital status, religious affiliation, type of school and educational attainment have been found to be associated with the level of knowledge.

The paper was not able to look on the association of attitude and risky behavior of the respondents to HIV and STDs due to time constraints and financial reasons. It is suggested that these variables be considered in future studies.

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