

A STUDY ON MID-CAREER TRANSITIONS AMONG HR PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

These days, employees change jobs about as often as professional ballplayers change teams, and pretty much for the same reasons: A better opportunity to succeed, a more pleasant venue. And, oh yeah, there is always the prospect of making more money. An increasing number of corporate managers in their forties have an all pervasive fear of being seen as dinosaurs. Nearly half of the middle managers in India are either in the middle of a job change or are planning to quit their jobs for a new one – shows the results by Accenture. So this study emphasizes on what are the major factors that affect them in the mid-career. The objectives of the research are to study the causative factors for mid-career transition and their impact on mid-career professionals and to study the coping mechanism adopted by professionals to overcome mid-career transition. The study has shown that respondents who belong to the specialized HR are highly affected by job satisfaction, psychological factors, personal growth and knowledge up-gradation.

Keywords: *Mid-Career Transition, job satisfaction, psychological factors, personal growth factors and knowledge upgradation.*

Introduction:

Change is a psychological process that affects not only groups, but all of the individuals within the groups. Unmanaged transition can lead to symptoms such as anxiety, anger, depression, and unnecessary turnover. Managing transitions well can heal both individuals and organizations. There are skilled managers and consultants that are uniquely trained to identify symptoms of unmanaged transition and to provide leadership in developing strategies yielding a well-managed transition.

Transition means job change. The problems faced by executives during their mid-career are many. One of the problems is when there is a job change during their mid-career. This may also include the factors that provoke them for a job change. It may be due to the technological changes, which might have been difficult for him to cope up or when he is stuck between the well-polished top level managers and low level fresher.

Most professionals face mid-career blues—four or five years into the job and they start getting haunted by lack of further challenges, disillusionment, etc. This is not just a problem being faced by individuals but at an organizational level it is directly linked to attrition and productivity aspects. While one cannot actually compare it with the proverbial “seven year itch”, the HR departments of IT organizations see it as a serious issue which needs attention. Many organizations are consequently working hard to rejuvenate their relationships with employees at regular intervals. The HR heads have started active programmes for addressing the issue.

Significance on the study:

These days, employees change jobs about as often as professional ballplayers change teams, and pretty much for the same reasons: A better opportunity to succeed, a more pleasant venue. And, oh yeah, there is always the prospect of making more money. Not that there's anything wrong with that. Sure, the staff directory gets outdated as soon as it's slipped into the mail slots. But with the 'company man' concept clearly passé, talented employees are taking advantage of in-demand status to leap from one job to another—sometimes plotting a future move before they've even had a chance to work out in the new corporate fitness centre. But changing jobs during mid-career is different from normal job change as they have a lot of factors which need to be considered while changing jobs and which might also force them to change their current jobs.

Statement of the problem:

An increasing number of corporate managers in their forties have an all pervasive fear of being seen as dinosaurs. Nearly half of the middle managers in India are either in the middle of a job change or are planning to quit their jobs for a new one – shows the results by Accenture. So this study emphasizes on what are the major factors that affect them in the mid-career.

Objectives of Research:

- To study the causative factors for mid-career transition and their impact on mid-career professionals.
- To study the coping mechanism adopted by professionals to overcome mid-career transition.

Research Methodology:

Research design:The research design followed in this study is a descriptive research design. This research design helps the researcher to get into deeper aspects of a study. Thus helping the researcher to understand the facts of the study.

Operational Definitions:

- **Job satisfaction:**In this study the job satisfaction means the level of satisfaction every respondent has on his job. This is considered as one of the factors for transition on which the questions are posed to the respondents
- **Psychological factor:**In this context of study, a psychological factor is considered as another factor for transition. Here in this the respondent is questioned on when he is affected by any psychological factor like ego conflict or any misunderstanding with the job which makes him transit his job.
- **Personal growth:**In this study this is considered as another factor for transition. When his personal growth is not as expected or when he is stagnated in the particular job will he transit jobs?
- **Knowledge up gradation:**This is one another factor for transition where the respondent is questioned on whether knowledge up gradation like not updating with the knowledge like current market scenario or when he feels he needs to learn more makes him transit jobs.
- **Ranking:**Ranking in this context is taken as coping mechanism where the respondent has ranked the probable coping mechanism for this particular study on mid-career transition.

Sample size:The sample size is a representation of the universe. In this study the sample size is 60.

Sampling technique:The sampling technique followed in this study is a stratified random sampling. In this the sample is collected from the respondents who belong to the age group of 30-45. Stratified random sampling is where the researcher collects the sample from a particular category of respondents.

Field of study:As the study focuses on HR professionals the field of study is restricted only to HR professionals with a particular age category.

Data Analysis:**HYPOTHESIS I**

Null Hypothesis : There is no significant association between independent variables (such as age, experience, Nature of job and designation) and level of influence of job satisfaction on mid-career transition

Table 1 : Chi Square for association between Independent Variables and Level of Job Satisfaction and level of influence of job satisfaction on mid-career transition

Age	Job Satisfaction		Total	Chi-square value	P value	Result
	High	Low				
Below 40 years	8 (44%)	10 (56%)	18 (100%)	0.082	0.053	Accepted
Above 40 years	17 (40%)	25 (60%)	42 (100%)			
Experience	Job Satisfaction		Total	0.008	0.822	Accepted
	High	Low				
Below 15 years	9 (41%)	13 (59%)	22 (100%)	0.008	0.822	Accepted
Above 15 years	16 (42%)	22 (58%)	38 (100%)			
Nature of Job	Job Satisfaction		Total	0.156	0.872	Accepted
	High	Low				
Specialised HR	12 (44%)	15 (56%)	27 (100%)	0.156	0.872	Accepted

Generalist HR	13 (39%)	20 (61%)	33 (100%)	4.212	0.178	Accepted
Designation	Job Satisfaction		Total			
	High	Low				
Senior Manager	9 (29%)	22 (71%)	31 (100%)			
Junior Manager	16 (55%)	13 (45%)	29 (100%)			

- **Age Versus Level of Job Satisfaction:** 44% who are less than 40 years and 40% who are above 40 years of age have a high level of job satisfaction. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between age of respondents and their level of job satisfaction on mid-career transition.
- **Experience Versus Level of Job Satisfaction :** 42% who have more than 15 years of experience and 41% who are above 40 years have a high level of job satisfaction. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between experience of respondents and their level of job satisfaction on mid-career transition.
- **Nature of Job Versus Level of Job Satisfaction :** 44% of HR Managers whose nature of job is Specialised HR and 39% whose nature of job is that of Generalist HR have a high level of job satisfaction. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between nature of job of respondents and their level of job satisfaction on mid-career transition.
- **Designation Versus Level of Job Satisfaction :** 55% of respondents who are designated as Junior Managers and 29% who are Senior Managers have a high level of job satisfaction. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between designation of respondents and their level of job satisfaction on mid-career transition.

HYPOTHESIS II

Null Hypothesis : There is no significant association between independent variables (such as age, experience, Nature of job and designation) and level of influence of Psychological factors on mid-career transition

Table 2 : Chi Square for association between Independent Variables and level of influence of Psychological factors on mid-career transition

Age	Psychological Factors		Total	Chi-square value	P value	Result
	High	Low				
Below 40 years	10 (56%)	8 (44%)	18 (100%)	0.082	0.541	Accepted
Above 40 years	25 (59%)	17 (41%)	42 (100%)			
Experience	Psychological Factors		Total	0.008	0.061	Accepted
	High	Low				
Below 15 years	12 (55%)	10 (45%)	22 (100%)			
Above 15 years	23 (61%)	15 (39%)	38 (100%)			
Nature of Job	Psychological Factors		Total	1.667	0.781	Accepted
	High	Low				
Specialized HR	5 (18%)	22 (82%)	27 (100%)			
Generalist HR	11 (33%)	22 (67%)	33 (100%)			
Designation	Psychological Factors		Total	0.024	0.071	Accepted
	High	Low				
Senior Manager	8 (26%)	23 (74%)	31 (100%)			
Junior Manager	8 (28%)	21 (72%)	29 (100%)			

- **Age Versus Level of Psychological Factors** :56% who are less than 40 years and 59% who are above 40% have indicated a high level of influence of Psychological Factors. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between age of respondents and the influence of Psychological Factors on mid-career transition.
- **Experience Versus Level of Psychological Factors** :61% of who have more than 15 years of experience and 55% who have an experience of more than 15 years have indicated a high level of influence of Psychological Factors. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between experience of respondents and influence of Psychological Factors on mid-career transition.
- **Nature of Job Versus Level of Psychological Factors** : 18%of HR Managers whose nature of job is Specialised and 33% of the respondents whose nature of job is that of Generalist HR have a indicated a high level of influence of Psychological Factors. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between nature of job of respondents and the influence of Psychological Factors on mid-career transition.
- **Designation Versus Level of Psychological Factors** :28%of respondents who are designated as Junior Managersand26% designated as Senior Managers have a indicated a high level of influence of Psychological Factors. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between designation of respondents and influence of Psychological Factors on mid-career transition.

HYPOTHESIS III

Null Hypothesis : There is no significant association between independent variables (such as age, experience, Nature of job and designation) and level of influence of Personal Growth Factors on mid-career transition

Table 3 : Chi Square for association between Independent Variables and level of Personal Growth Factors on mid-career transition

Age	Personal Growth Factors		Total	Chi-square value	P value	Result
	High	Low				
Below 40 years	7 (39%)	11 (61%)	18 (100%)	0.625	0.059	Accepted
Above 40 years	21 (50%)	21 (50%)	42 (100%)			
Experience	Personal Growth Factors		Total	0.463	0.922	Accepted
	High	Low				
Below 15 years	9 (41%)	13 (59%)	22 (100%)	0.463	0.922	Accepted
Above 15 years	19 (50%)	19 (50%)	38 (100%)			
Nature of Job	Personal Growth Factors		Total	0.043	0.772	Accepted
	High	Low				
Specialized HR	13 (48%)	14 (52%)	27 (100%)	0.043	0.772	Accepted
Generalist HR	15 (45%)	18 (55%)	33 (100%)			
Designation	Personal Growth Factors		Total	1.632	0.921	Accepted
	High	Low				
Senior Manager	12 (39%)	19 (61%)	31 (100%)	1.632	0.921	Accepted
Junior Manager	16 (55%)	13 (45%)	29 (100%)			

- **Age Versus Level of Job Satisfaction:** 39% who are less than 40 years and 50% who are above 40 have indicated a high level of influence of personal growth factors. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between age of respondents and of influence of personal growth factors on mid-career transition.

- **Experience Versus Level of Job Satisfaction** :50% who have more than 15 years of experience and 41% of the respondents who are above 40 years have indicated a high level of influence of personal growth factors. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between experience of respondents and influence of personal growth factors on mid-career transition.
- **Nature of Job Versus Level of Job Satisfaction** :48%of HR Managers whose nature of job is Specialised HR and 45% of the respondents whose nature of job is that of Generalist HR have indicated a high level of influence of personal growth factors. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between nature of job of respondents and influence of personal growth factors on mid-career transition.
- **Designation Versus Level of Job Satisfaction** :55% of respondents who are designated as Junior Managers and 39% of the respondents who are Senior Managers have indicated a high level of influence of personal growth factors.. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between experience of respondents and influence of personal growth factors on mid-career transition.

HYPOTHESIS IV

Null Hypothesis : There is no significant association between independent variables such as age, experience, Nature of job and designation) and level of influence of Knowledge upgradation

Table 4 : Chi Square for association between Independent Variables and level of Personal Growth Factors on mid-career transition

Age	Knowledge Upgradation		Total	Chi-square value	P value	Result
	High	Low				
Below 40 years	2 (11%)	16 (89%)	18 (100%)	2.464	0.781	Accepted
Above 40 years	13 (31%)	29 (69%)	42 (100%)			
Experience	Knowledge Upgradation		Total	0.096	0.081	Accepted
	High	Low				
Below 15 years	5 (23%)	17 (77%)	22 (100%)	0.096	0.081	Accepted
Above 15 years	10 (26%)	28 (74%)	38 (100%)			
Nature of Job	Knowledge Upgradation		Total	1.818	0.733	Accepted
	High	Low				
Specialized HR	9 (33%)	18 (67%)	27 (100%)	1.818	0.733	Accepted
Generalist HR	6 (18%)	27 (82%)	33 (100%)			
Designation	Knowledge Upgradation		Total	5.006	0.092	Accepted
	High	Low				
Senior Manager	4 (13%)	27 (87%)	31 (100%)	5.006	0.092	Accepted
Junior Manager	11 (38%)	18 (62%)	29 (100%)			

- **Age Versus Level of Job Satisfaction:** 11% who are less than 40 years and 31% who are above 40 have indicated a high level of influence of knowledge upgradation. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between age of respondents and of influence of knowledge upgradation on mid-career transition.
- **Experience Versus Level of Job Satisfaction** :26% who have more than 15 years of experience and 23% of the respondents who are above 40 years have indicated a high level of influence of knowledge upgradation. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between experience of respondents and influence of knowledge upgradation on mid-career transition.

- **Nature of Job Versus Level of Job Satisfaction** :33%of HR Managers whose nature of job is Specialised HR and 18% of the respondents whose nature of job is that of Generalist HR have indicated a high level of influence of knowledge upgradation. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between nature of job of respondents and influence of knowledge upgradation on mid-career transition.
- **Designation Versus Level of Job Satisfaction** :38% of respondents who are designated as Junior Managers and 13% of the respondents who are Senior Managers have indicated a high level of influence of knowledge upgradation. The results of the Chi square test shows that no significant association between experience of respondents and influence of influence of knowledge upgradation on mid-career transition.

Table 5 .Ranking of Coping Mechanisms

Coping Mechanism	Total	Rank
Training	239	4
Re-Skilling	245	3
Mentoring	278	2
Management Development Programme	329	1
E-Learning	238	5
Assessment Centre	183	6
Consulting	168	7

This table shows the distribution of the ranking of the probable coping mechanisms. And their corresponding totals. From the table we can understand that the respondents have ranked management development Programme on the top, which is followed by mentoring. Training and re-skilling ranked next. The respondents have ranked eLearning, Assessment Centre and Consulting as the last ranking. Thus we can infer that Management Development Programme is taken as a very effective coping mechanism whereas Consulting is not considered effective coping mechanism for this problem.

Findings of the Study:

Factors Influencing Transition

- From the analysis we can understand that respondents who belong to the specialized HR are highly affected by job satisfaction, psychological factors, personal growth and knowledge up-gradation.
- Respondents who belong to the junior profile are affected by all the factors when it comes to transition.
- Respondents who are less than 40 years are not affected by knowledge up-gradation, psychological factors and personal growth factor.
- All the respondents who have completed their post-graduation are highly affected by all the factors for transitions.
- Psychological factor has affected respondents who have more than 15 years of experience.

Coping Mechanisms

- It can be understood from the ranking that Management Development Programme is a highly effective coping mechanism.
- It can also be inferred that mentoring is the next effective coping mechanism programme among the professionals.
- It can be learnt that consulting is not such an effective coping mechanism for the professionals in their mid-career.

Suggestions

- The researcher from the study felt that the professionals at this particular age need more attention from the management as well when it comes to any crisis to them during their mid-career.
- There needs to be a holistic study on mid-life crisis which talks more about problems faced by an individual during his mid-life.
- The researcher feels that the topic should also focus on general transitions, which talks more on job change done by any individual irrespective of his or her age.

Conclusions:

Most of the middle management managers irrespective of their profession are facing problems from the environment and personal life while they are making a transition. This mid-career crisis can be managed

only with equal support from the organization. These professionals need support from the organization when it comes to any crisis in their middle age. The mid-career job change is different from normal job change because of the kind of role they play in an organization and the responsibilities that are posed on them at this age.

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