# THE PHENOMENON OF OUTSOURCING: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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## ABSTRACT

*From the time of Industrial Revolution, organizations have struggled with how they can utilize their competitive advantage to increase their market share. The main emphasis at the 20th century was a large integrated organization that can "own, manage, and directly control" its business process. By spreading, organization expected to protect profits, even though expansion required a longer hierarchical level. As a result, organizations attempting to compete globally in the 1970s and 1980s were handicapped by a lack of alertness that resulted from overstuffed management structures. So many large organizations developed a new strategy of focusing on their core business, to increase their flexibility and creativity, which required identifying critical processes and deciding which could be outsourced. The term "outsourcing" became popular in the United States near the turn of the 21st century. As compare to outsourcing of manufacturing, outsourcing of services is a relatively new trend. The 1980s was the beginning of services outsourcing to India and accelerated rapidly in the 1990s. Over the past decades, the concept of Outsourcing has become an important concept in the study of researchers, scholars and industrialists etc. So, the present researchers have made an effort with this review paper for those researchers, analysts and industrialists who are connected with Outsourcing (whether internal outsourcing, external outsourcing, knowledge outsourcing, or any other area related to Outsourcing). Every research projects requires the review of concerned literature to the purpose of determining the smooth contours for determining the right direction for doing the research.*

**Keywords:** Outsourcing, vertical integration, in-sourcing, SWOT analysis, BPOs.

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Page 43

## INTRODUCTION

From the time of Industrial Revolution, organizations have struggled with how they can utilize their competitive advantage to increase their market share. The main emphasis at the 20th century was a large integrated organization that can "own, manage, and directly control" its business process. In the 1950s and 1960s, the wave was moving towards diversification to enlarged organization bases and take advantage of economies of scale. By spreading, organization expected to protect profits, even though expansion required a longer hierarchical level. As a result, organizations attempting to compete globally in the 1970s and 1980s were handicapped by a lack of alertness that resulted from overstuffed management structures. So many large organizations developed a new strategy of focusing on their core business, to increase their flexibility and creativity, which required identifying critical processes and deciding which could be outsourced.

Outsourcing is a tendency that is becoming more common in many industries for services. It has usually been regarded as essential to manage a business and it is a growing, increasingly global phenomenon in the new millennium. The term "outsourcing" became popular in the United States near the turn of the 21st century. As compare to outsourcing of manufacturing, outsourcing of services is a relatively new trend. The 1980s was the beginning of services outsourcing to India and accelerated rapidly in the 1990s.

## Meaning of Outsourcing

In today's world where information technology has become critical to business, the meaning of outsourcing has undergone a drastic change over the years. Generally, outsourcing is the contracting out of a business process to a third-party. Outsourcing sometimes involves transferring employees and assets from one firm to another, but not always. Outsourcing is also used to describe the practice of handing over control of public services to for-profit corporations.

Outsourcing can be defined as "the strategic use of outside resources to perform activities traditionally handled by internal staff and resources". Sometimes also known as "facilities

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Page 44

management", outsourcing is a strategy by which an organization contracts out major functions to specialized and efficient service providers, who become valued business partners. Organizations have always hired contractors for particular types of work, or to smooth-out peaks and troughs in their workload, and have formed long-term relationships with firms whose capabilities complement or supplement their own. However, the difference between simply supplementing resources by "subcontracting" and actual outsourcing is that the latter involves substantial restructuring of particular business activities including, often, the transfer of staff from a host organization to a specialist, usually smaller, organization with the required core competencies. (Robert Handfield, 2006)

## Outsourcing versus Vertical Integration

The opposite of outsourcing is called vertical Integration, which entails bringing processes handled by third-party firms in-house, and is sometimes accomplished via In-sourcing. Outsourcing and in-sourcing are methods of dispersing work among different departments or organizations for strategic reasons. In-sourcing is typically done solely from within an organization's own operational infrastructure, while outsourcing uses organizations not affiliated with the outsourcing organization to perform a task. There are cost and resource differences between outsourcing and in-sourcing that influences an organization's management decisions. A significant difference between outsourcing and in-sourcing is the cost to the organization. In-sourcing is generally more expensive to an organization because new work processes must be developed to start the new division of the organization; outsourcing uses an outside organization that already has a workflow developed and employees familiar with the process. Organizations that use outsourcing do not use their own resources for manufacturing products or providing services. In-sourcing uses resources already owned by the organization to achieve a goal. The location of organization operations is usually different between outsourcing and in-sourcing. In-sourcing typically involves placing the new operation on site at the organization or somewhere in the immediate vicinity. Outsourcing usually involves using an outside organization that is not near the main organization's operations. An organization's control over its operations differs if it uses outsourcing or in-sourcing. Organizations that outsource a manufacturing process or a

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Page 45

service often have little to no managerial control over the way in which the outside organization operates.

## Why to Outsource?

Earlier the most common reasons to outsource used to be reduction of cost and headcount. McFarlan and Nolan (1995), argued that, until the 1990s, the major drivers for outsourcing IT were primarily cost-effective access to specialized or occasionally needed computing power or system development skills, avoidance of building in-house IT skills and skill sets in small or low-technology organizations, and access to special functional capabilities. Others argue that the growths in indirect overhead costs, which represent "non-core competencies", are increasingly being outsourced (Chalos, 1994; Branda, 1999). Many scholars and practitioners, during 1990s period, argued that global competitive pressures have positioned large organizations to adopt greater market discipline, dropping their product range and reducing their vertical links in the production process (Grant, 1995; Domberger, 1998). As a result, corporations have 'divested peripheral or supplementary' businesses in order to focus upon their `core' business and, in turn, have vertically 'de-integrated' by increasingly outsourcing their requirements for components and business services" (Grant, 1995, p. 318).

But now a days the motives behind outsourcing are often more strategic, like how an organization can best utilize its core competencies. Core competencies are particular strengths relative to other organizations in the industry, which provide the fundamental basis for the provision of added value. To succeed in an emerging global market, it is more important and required to build core competencies rather than vertical integration. In a race to achieve cost cutting, quality and productivity, most executives do not spend their time developing a corporate view of the future because this exercise demands high intellectual energy and commitment. The difficult questions may challenge their own ability to view the future opportunities but an attempt to find their answers will lead towards organizational benefits. Some organizations  have now realized that they cannot be best in everything so they have decided to go for the thing in which they are best at and outsource everything else i.e., focus on their core competency, and let

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Page 46

someone else do the rest in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. So it's clear from above analysis that an organization outsources its non-core activities.

Organizations should be more focused on our core competencies by outsourcing our non-core activities. Organizations have started focusing on their core competencies and outsourcing many non-core functions, for which they had no competence internally.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The pace of increase in knowledge moves towards rapid changes. It grows more and more than the passage of time. Therefore, a researcher has to be conscious about the changes and developments in the field of his/her study. For this purpose, the researcher has to survey the available literature like novels, reports, researches, books, articles, newspapers and journals in order to add knowledge in its study. Over the past decades, the concept of Outsourcing has become an important concept in the study of researchers, scholars and industrialists etc. So, the present researchers have made an effort with this review paper for those researchers, analysts and industrialists who are connected with Outsourcing (whether internal outsourcing, external outsourcing, knowledge outsourcing, or any other area related to Outsourcing).

**Mandy Sim (2010)** presented a paper entitled as 'The intangible costs of human-resource outsourcing'. In this paper she gave her viewpoint about dangers in outsourcing of some HR tasks while keeping others in-house. She suggested that Organizations should therefore consider carefully before making the decision to outsource their entire human-resource department or some of their HR functions.

**Dr. Sarwar Azhar** presented a paper in 3rd international Conference on Business Management which is organized by School of Business and Economics University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan. This paper was carried out to discover the reasons of HR Outsourcing in the Pakistan's business scenario. The primary goal of the study was to understand and explain the nature or mechanisms of the relationship between the four independent outsourcing variables (performance appraisal, payroll, training & recruitment and selection) and dependent variable i.e. cost Reduction separately.

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Page 47

**Indian Merchants Chamber** holds a seminar on **INDIAN BANKS AND THE GLOBAL CHALLENGES** "Outsourcing Opportunity – Strategic and Operational Level". Chairman & Managing Director of Dena Bank presented their view on this topic with analytical thinking. He explained the benefits of Outsourcing, risk of outsourcing and strategies to overcome the risk of outsourcing.

**Ravi Kumar Jain & Ramachandran Natarajan (2011)** conducted a paper entitled as 'Factors influencing the outsourcing decisions: a study of the banking sector in India'. The main objective of this paper is to analyze the impact of factors which influence the decision makers' attitude towards outsourcing. A model based on literature was formulated to identify the factors which influence the outsourcing decision in banking sector. This study found that the impact of perceived benefits, perceived roadblocks, and perceived criticality on the attitude towards outsourcing was strong and statistically significant but the impact of perceived risk was weak and statistically insignificant. Multiple Regression analysis explained that the combined impact of these four factors on outsourcing attitude was also statistically significant. This study also resulted that the outsourcing client of banking sector preferred the outsourcing quality factors such as process improvement, services improvement and cost transparency more than cost savings.

**Christine Harland etal. (2005)** presented a paper entitled as 'Outsourcing: assessing the risks and benefits for organizations, sectors and nations'. The main objective of this paper was to explore the benefits and risks of outsourcing in public and private sector organizations, sectors (industries) and nations. This study captured a conceptual framework for outsourcing after synthesizing six themes i.e. policy issues, decision-making processes for outsourcing, new organizational, sectoral and national industry structures, management of the outsource relationships and outcomes of outsourcing.

**Aruna Kumar Panda (2012)** presented an article entitled as 'Business process outsourcing: a strategic review on Indian perspective'. The paper describes the post-liberalized economic scenario of Indian outsourcing industry with the help of SWOT analysis. Results of SWOT analysis were as follows:

Strength areas

✓ Availability of high-qualified and amiable English speaking work force,

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Page 48

- ✓ Easy access to high-skilled manpower associated with low cost structure,

- ✓ Stable call centers working in late shifts with suitable time-zone differences and

- ✓ Improvement of telecom and power sectors.

Major weaknesses

- ✓ Academia and industry: an improper match.

- ✓ Growing scarcity of expertise in specialized KPO and LPO market

- ✓ Lack of infrastructural facilities in tier-II and III cities.

Opportunity areas

- ✓ Year-long experience of Indian BPO firms

- ✓ Small cities with big potential

- ✓ Mega allocation of fund for higher education

Major threats

- ✓ Recent trend of job-shifting

- ✓ A comparatively higher rate of taxation coupled with trade restrictions prevailing in India.

- ✓ A fear of resistance from the developed world for job shifting to India

- ✓ Political instability and terrorism.

**THOMAS JAMES NORMAN (2009)** submitted a dissertation on the topic of 'Outsourcing Human Resource Activities: Measuring the Hidden Costs and Benefits'. This dissertation contributes to the literature of human resource management (HRM) and business process outsourcing (BPO) in three important ways. First, this study reports the level of human resource outsourcing (HRO) for 34 distinct human resource management activities. Second, this study examines the impact of HRO on organizational outcomes by attempting to detect an association between levels of outsourcing different types of HRM activities and three dependent variables: employee turnover, employee satisfaction, and customer satisfaction. Third, this study reports the assessments of several dozen expert raters as to the attributes of the 34 measured HRM activities and their suitability for outsourcing. The evidence suggests that HRO levels vary along with the predictions of transaction cost economics and that outsourcing certain HRM activities may be associated with employee retention.

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Page 49

**LesliLeslie Willcockse Willcocks (2010)** presents a paper entitled as 'EXPERT VIEWPOINT The next step for the CEO Moving IT-enabled services outsourcing to the strategic agenda'. This paper explored five top reasons which make the CEOs and top managerial expert's teams to consider outsource decision as strategic decision. The CEOs feels that IT outsourcing impacts a firm's market value, the steep size of outsourcing expenditure merits senior management attention and a wrong outsourcing decision can badly damage corporate image. Outsourcing is becoming a strategic job for many businesses, and only the CEOs have the real bargaining power to make outsourcing deliver more beneficial.

**Atul Gupta etal. (2005)** conducted a study entitled as 'Outsourcing in higher education: an empirical examination'. This study measured the degree of implementation and satisfaction level of the outsourcing project in Maryland, North Carolina and Virginia's education institutions. Researcher obtained the following results:

- Dining and bookstore services were recorded as widely outsourced services whereas Administrative computing and childcare services were recorded as least outsourced services.
- CEO's outsourcing effort was supported by public.
- A few institutions involve effected employees in decision making process.
- Institutions leaders view regarding the use of outsourcing in future in their institutions and other institutions were found similar.
- Cost saving, skilled worker and budgetary constraints were found as the largest reasons for outsourcing.
- Institutions leader's primary concerns about outsourcing were loss of control and increase in cost of service.
- Those institutions that do outsource today were found as happier with their services as those choosing not to outsource.

**W. Bailey et al. 2002** presented a paper entitled as 'Outsourcing in Edinburgh and the Lothians'. This study checked the extent, nature, motivations, benefits and problems of the outsourcing in Lothian region. It was found that vast majority of the organizations in the Lothian region

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Page 50

outsourced at least one activity, with cleaning, security, catering, maintenance, and manufacturing being the most common areas, the principal motivations being to increase the quality and to decrease of the activity outsourced. The criteria used for selecting outsourcing contractors were found to be depend on the quality and cost of the service offered and technical capability of contractors and the most important activities in evaluating outsourcers were through meetings, reviews of staff abilities and technical expertise, and by third party certification. The main benefits of outsourcing were reduced costs, removal of complacency from in-house staff, improved quality of service, increased management focus on core activities, and access to new capabilities. The main problems fixed with outsourcing were loss of control, problems with confidentiality, difficulties in communication & vender management, increased delivery times and opportunist exploitation by supplier.

**James K. Sang (2010)** presented a paper entitled as 'Outsourcing in Kenyan Universities: An Examination of Challenges and Opportunities'. This study examined outsourcing practices in Kenyan Public Universities. The results showed that outsourcing in Kenyan Universities is a new concept and most outsourcing activities were limited to only cleaning, security, and catering. The achievement made from outsourcing activities were financial & time savings, administrative efficiency & improved security. This study found three methods i.e. open tendering, continuous assessment/direct supervision and liaison with senior university staff through regular meetings for Selection and Evaluation of Contractors for outsourcing services. Some specific area such as Teaching and research, administrative/governance functions, finance and accounting, internal audit and laboratory/technical work, e.g., repair and service of motor vehicles were considered impossible to be outsourced. Sensitive nature of some services, Negative attitudes by staff, lack of sufficient human resources to monitor and evaluate contractors' performance, Students' non-cooperation and community interference were discovered as the challenges of outsourcing. Some lessons and recommendations which were suggested by the university administrators to improve and ensure successful outsourcing were also mentioned in this study.

**Theodre S. Glickman et.al. (2007)** presented a paper entitled as 'Outsourcing on American campuses National developments and the food service experience at GWU'. This study examined the outsourcing of food services in one private university George Washington

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Page 51

University located in the mid-Atlantic region in the USA. This study found that Aramark Corporation, a major foodservice provider was replaced by Colonial cash Program to improve student satisfaction in GWU. It provides the valuable insights which are informative to clients of outsourcing services and providers of outsourcing services.

**A Services Globalization and Investment Advisory firm Tholons(2010)** presented a white paper entitled as 'Government Sector Outsourcing Transforming Public Service with Outsourced IT Services'. This whitepaper explored outsourcing as a New Public Management (NPM) Concept. A brief discussion of this paper is as follows:

- The difference between public sector outsourcing and private sector outsourcing is lies in their Bottom- line.

- Data Management, Infrastructure Management, Application Development & Management and customer services are the primary services lines which usually outsourced by the public sector according to this paper.

- Type of work and Cost savings are the two main concerns that decide whether outsourcing be onshore or offshore.

- Outsourcing leads to efficiency & effectiveness in the performance of Public services and also strengthens the political stability of government organizations.

- Outsourcing companies can increase their market share and maintain a positive public image by the way of servicing government contracts. But every company cannot enter easily in this sector for servicing government contracts.

-  "Shipping work abroad" and Data security are another two main growth inhibitors of outsourcing in government sector.

**Reyes Gonzalez et al (2009)** presented a paper entitled as 'Information System Outsourcing Reasons and risk: An Empirical Study'. The reasons and risks of Information system outsourcing were investigated in the context of large Spanish firms.  After a review of literature several reasons were identified like Focusing on Strategies Issues, Increasing flexibility, Quality Improvement, Facilitating Access to technology, reducing the Risk of Obsolescence, Saving staff costs & Technology Costs and following the fashions. These reasons were grouped in three

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Page 52

categories i.e. *Strategic reasons*, *Technological reasons* and *Economic reasons*. Similarly risk were identified like problem of provider's staff qualification, the lack of Compliance with the contract by the provider, dependence, loss of technological knowledge, security, Unclear Cost-Benefit, Provider's inability to adopt to the new technologies and possible Opposition of staff etc. These risks were grouped in three category labeled as *Outsourcing Generic risk*, *Risk Derived from the provider* and *Risk Derived from the client side*. The relationships were also emerged in the results attained with the help of test. This study also made a comparative analysis of IS outsourcing Risk and Reasons in 2001 and in 2006.

**Sadi Assaf et.al. (2010)** presented a paper entitled as 'Factors affecting outsourcing decisions of maintenance services in Saudi Arabian universities'. The objectives of this paper was to identify the critical factors that influence the decision to outsource maintenance services in Saudi Arabian public universities, and on the basis of the expressed opinion of the in-house maintenance managers of these universities the relative importance of the each critical factors is to be investigated. This study found that Saudi universities generally value the importance of the quality, management and strategic factors when making outsourcing decisions. The most important three factors influencing the decision to outsource maintenance services in the public Saudi Arabia universities were recognized as "increase the speed of implementation", "improve quality requirements" and "risk sharing with contractors".

**Tibor Kremic et. al. (2006)** presented a research paper entitled as 'Outsourcing decision support: a survey of benefits, risks, and decision factors'. In this study, firstly author reviewed the literature of outsourcing using a decision framework. From literature, Cost; Strategy and Politics were identified as three major categories of motivations for outsourcing. Several expected benefits, risks and critical factors were also identified. Secondly, author identified the relationship among the studies using cluster analysis. After analyzing numerous studies through statistical tools this study concluded that literature is quite rich in the context of presenting the benefits, motivations, risk and strategic issues to outsourcing but when we talk about proposing tools and guidelines in terms of decision support, the exiting literature is not sufficient and it demands some more additional work.

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Page 53

**George Lafferty and Amanda Roan (1999)** presented a paper entitled as 'Public sector outsourcing: implications for training and skills'. This paper tried to identify the impact of concurrent development of public sector employment outsourcing in Australia. It was found that the use of labor hire agencies or contracting out of clerical and administrative work in Australian Public Service and Higher Education System causes reduction in the quality of skill and training methods of employees. This paper suggested that strategies should be designed so as to prevent further erosion of the training and skill base.

**Why is the literature reviewed?**

Every research projects requires the review of concerned literature to the purpose of determining the smooth contours for determining the right direction for doing the research. Further, the review provides a well knit fabric of gaps, tentative objectives, hypothesis, analysis, synthesis and interpretations. For scholars, the depth and breadth of the literature review emphasizes the credibility of the writer in his/her field. For the professionals they are useful reports that keep them up to date with their field of study. Therefore, with the help of review of literature a researcher can identify, appropriate methodology, research design, methods of measuring concepts, techniques of analysis and carried out numerous field observations to illuminate the darkness of its field.

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Page 54

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Page 56

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Page 57