

A Phenomenology of Social Wellbeing: Call Center Agents in Focus

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Abstract: This research aims to explore and understand the lived experience of social well-being of Call Center Agents in Davao City, Philippines, and to investigate how the demands of Call Center Work impact their social connections/interactions and work-life balance. This study addresses a gap in the literature regarding the social consequences of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) employment beyond the typical mental and physical health issues related to BPO employment. A qualitative hermeneutic-phenomenological research methodology was used to investigate participants' lived experiences. Purposive sampling was utilized to recruit participants; ten night-shift call center workers participated in the research. Data collection consisted of five individual in-depth interviews and one focus-group discussion. Data analysis was conducted using Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method, in combination with thematic coding, to determine key themes. The results indicate that Call Center workers experience numerous social challenges, including strained social relationships, social isolation, work stress, and difficulty achieving an adequate work-life balance due to untraditional and unpredictable work hours and the emotional requirements of their job. However, despite the many challenges they experienced, all call center workers interviewed indicated personal growth, resilience, and a strong sense of belonging at their workplace, which helped mitigate some of the negative aspects of the work. Skill development, commitment to work, social support from others, and lifestyle changes were identified as the common coping strategies. The overall conclusion of this study is that call center work has both positive and negative effects on social well-being. While a job demands high levels of social and emotional energy and can create social and emotional strain, it can also promote the development of personal skills and adaptability. The results of this study have implications for developing comprehensive workplace programs, such as flexible scheduling options, wellness programs, and increased social support systems, to improve the social and emotional well-being of call center workers. The results of this study demonstrate the importance of having social workers in occupational settings to improve employees' well-being and contribute to organizational sustainability.

Keywords: Social Work, Social Well-Being, Phenomenology, Call Center Agents, Davao City, Philippines.

SDG Indicators: SGD# 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SGD#89 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SGD#10 (Reduced Inequalities).

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I. INTRODUCTION

The call center industry has rapidly expanded over the past few decades and, therefore, plays a crucial role in global employment. According to Ramotowski (2025), Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) in the Philippines contributed \$35.4 billion to the economy in 2023, while also employing approximately 1.3 million individuals across more than 750 companies. Moreover, projections estimate that the industry will grow to \$37.87 billion by 2024 at a compound annual growth rate. This continuous expansion positioned the Philippines as a major player in the global outsourcing market, thus offering stable employment opportunities and fostering national economic growth. However, while the industry

provides financial stability and career advancement, several studies by Charoensukmongkol and Puyod (2020), Li and Wu (2025), Thriveni Kumari (2022), and Candelario et al. (2024) show that it exposes workers to a demanding, emotionally taxing, and physically exhausting work environment.

Furthermore, several studies conducted by Raheem and Haleem (2020) and Abutar et al. (2025) indicated that call center agents work in environments that demand a high level of emotional strength and flexibility. They are expected to stay calm, patient, and professional, even when handling challenging or angry customers, a responsibility that often leads to ongoing stress and emotional exhaustion. In addition, Ichwani et al. (2024) and Monika et al. (2023) demonstrated

the monotonous nature of call center work, coupled with high performance expectations, strict time pressure, and continuous monitoring, which further heightened stress and diminished psychological well-being. Consequently, over time, these stressors extend beyond mental health concerns, shaping how agents relate to others and negatively affecting their overall social life and quality of life.

Beyond emotional strain, an equally important yet often overlooked aspect of call center work is social wellbeing. According to Keyes (1998), social well-being refers to an individual's sense of belonging, social integration, and contribution to a community. In the context of the BPO environment, these dimensions are frequently challenged by the structured and high-pressure nature of the work. For instance, Wöhrmann et al. (2020) showed that long and irregular working hours, often including night shifts, weekends, and holidays, disrupt employees' social rhythms, making it difficult to sustain family relationships or engage in meaningful social interactions. Moreover, Harry (2021) and Candelario et al. (2024) indicated that limited opportunities for connection within the workplace can lead to feelings of isolation and detachment. Furthermore, emotional labor, wherein agents must regulate their emotions through constant customer engagement, intensifies this strain, particularly when social support is lacking. Gonçalves-Candeias et al. (2021) and Manjula and Rebecca (2025) suggest that a weak or highly competitive workplace culture can further reduce job satisfaction and inhibit the development of genuine interpersonal relationships.

The implications for poor social well-being are profound. For example, Garmendia et al. (2023) found that employees with limited social support tend to report lower job satisfaction, decreased productivity, and higher absenteeism, which ultimately affects organizational efficiency. Similarly, studies published by International Banker (2024) and Raheem and Haleem (2020) argue that social disconnection is associated with heightened stress, anxiety, and depression, further impairing workers' mental health and professional performance. From the lens of Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, the absence of social relatedness and autonomy undermines intrinsic motivation and overall wellness. Moreover, Salama et al. (2022) show that high turnover rates resulting from social and emotional exhaustion impose significant financial costs on companies owing to continuous recruitment and training demands. In addition, Wöhrmann et al. (2020) and Abutar et al. (2025) associated poor social well-being with sleep disturbances, chronic stress, and anxiety-related disorders, further diminishing an individual's quality of life. Collectively, the findings of previous researchers emphasize that the social consequences of call center work extend far beyond the individual, shaping organizational culture and performance.

This study is anchored in the Social Well-Being Theory by Keyes (1998), supported by the Self-Determination Theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which help explain how call center agents navigate their social well-being despite the pressures of their work environment. Social Well-Being Theory by Corey Keyes (1998) serves as the primary

foundation of this study. This theory examines how individuals connect with society, perceive others, and see their own roles in the community. Consequently, call center agents, who often work in high-pressure environments and irregular schedules, may find it challenging to maintain meaningful relationships. For example, the demands of their work, including long hours and emotionally taxing interactions, can lead to social isolation or difficulty sustaining connections with family and friends.

To further understand this study, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000) provides insight into the psychological needs that drive human motivation and well-being. The self-determination Theory highlights three core needs: autonomy (having control over one's life), competence (feeling capable of what one does), and relatedness (feeling connected to others). In a call center setting, autonomy is often limited owing to strict company policies and performance metrics, while competence is constantly challenged by demanding customer interactions. However, the need for relatedness remains crucial as social connections can serve as a source of support in stressful work environments.

Demerouti et al.'s (2001) Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model provides a framework for understanding the balance between workplace stressors and available resources. Work factors are categorized into job demands (e.g., workload, emotional stress, and time pressure) and job resources (e.g., coworker support, managerial encouragement, and wellness programs). When job demands exceed available resources, employees are more likely to experience stress and burnout, which can negatively impact their social wellbeing. Indeed, call center agents, who frequently deal with difficult customers, strict performance targets, and repetitive tasks, often face high job demands. However, access to job resources such as a supportive work culture or strong peer relationships can help mitigate these challenges. Therefore, this study explored how these factors influence agents' ability to maintain social connections and overall well-being.

By grounding research in Social Well-Being Theory, supported by Self-Determination Theory and the JD-R Model, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how call center agents balance their work demands with their need for meaningful social interactions. These theories will help explain the challenges they face, the coping strategies they use, and the factors that contribute to or hinder their overall well-being.

This study on the workforce is both timely and urgent. Although the industry provides significant economic opportunities, according to Kim et al. (2025), it is also known for its high-stress work environments, demanding schedules, and the emotional labor required to manage customer interactions, all of which can take a toll on employees' overall well-being. Moreover, while much research has focused on the mental and physical health effects of call center work, the social well-being of agents, for example, their ability to form and maintain relationships, engage in social activities, and participate in community life, remains underexplored.

This study aims to address this gap by examining how the nature of call center work affects employees' social lives. Importantly, understanding social well-being is crucial, as studies by Keyes (1998) and Ryan and Deci (2000) have shown that strong social connections are linked to better mental health, higher job satisfaction, and greater overall life fulfillment. In addition, according to Holman (2003), many agents work night shifts, which can interfere with family and social life, and thus contribute to feelings of isolation and disconnection.

By exploring these challenges, this study offers insights that can help call center companies implement policies and interventions such as scheduling adjustments and peer support programs to support employees' social well-being and enhance job satisfaction. Beyond organizational benefits, the findings have broader implications for government agencies, labor organizations, and employees. Specifically, Chopra et al. (2024) showed that workplace stress contributes to burnout, absenteeism, and high turnover, which negatively affect both workers and businesses. By examining the impact of workplace conditions on social well-being, this study can inform better labor policies, employee assistance programs, and mental health initiatives that promote a healthier work-life balance. Furthermore, many call center employees face these social challenges in silence, often believing that isolation and stress are simply part of the job; thus, by acknowledging these struggles, the study validates their experiences and encourages open conversations about workplace well-being, thereby fostering a culture that supports stronger relationships, connections, and fulfillment, even in high-pressure environments.

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of call center agents in relation to their social well-being. Although call center work provides economic stability and employment opportunities, it also involves irregular work schedules, heavy workloads, and sustained emotional labor, which may affect employees' personal lives and social relationships. Consequently, these work conditions can shape how agents experience, interpret, and manage their social interactions, both within and outside the workplace. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how call center agents perceive their social well-being, maintain and nurture meaningful relationships, and cope with the social demands brought about by their work environment.

Likewise, guided by a phenomenological approach, this study aimed to understand the social well-being of call center agents through their own perspectives and lived experiences. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions: How do call center agents describe their social well-being? What challenges do they encounter while maintaining and enhancing their social wellbeing? How do call center agents cope with these challenges? Finally, what insights and experiences can participants share that may be meaningful and helpful to fellow call center agents?

This study is significant for the social work profession because it highlights the social well-being of call center agents, a group often exposed to high work demands,

emotional labor, and occupational stress, which can negatively impact mental health. Bansiloy (2025) found that Philippine call center agents frequently experience anxiety and depression due to workplace stressors. Similarly, Candelario (2024) emphasized that call center workers face psychosocial risks related to irregular hours, high performance expectations, and emotional labor, which affect their overall well-being. As social work is concerned with promoting well-being and improving social functioning, these findings provide a deeper understanding of how workplace conditions influence workers' social relationships, sense of belonging, and mental health. By exploring the lived experiences of call center agents, this study offers valuable insights that can guide social workers in developing workplace-based interventions, mental health support programs, and advocacy efforts aimed at improving working conditions. Moreover, the findings contribute to social work education and research by highlighting the importance of social well-being and phenomenological approaches to understanding workers' experiences.

On a global scale, this study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being, Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities, situating the lived experiences of Filipino call center agents within a larger framework of sustainable human development.

This study focuses specifically on call center agents working in Davao City, the Philippines, who have at least one year of work experience. By delimiting the inquiry to this geographic location, the research ensures cultural and contextual continuity, allowing for a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of participants' experiences within a shared work environment. The study adopts a qualitative and exploratory research design, with the primary aim of generating deeper insights into the social well-being of call center agents, rather than producing findings that are statistically generalizable to call center employees at the national or global level. Qualitative inquiry is particularly appropriate when the objective is to understand the meanings, perceptions, and lived experiences from the perspective of participants (Creswell, 2013). Consistent with phenomenological research traditions, this study seeks to describe how call center agents make sense of their social realities within the workplace (Colaizzi, 1978). A key delimitation of this study is the inclusion of only those agents who have been employed in the industry for at least one year, ensuring that participants possess sufficient exposure to the work environment to provide meaningful and reflective accounts of their experiences.

In terms of data collection, this study utilized in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as the primary methods. These qualitative techniques are well-suited to phenomenological research, as they enable the elicitation of rich, detailed narratives that capture participants' lived experiences (Tiwari et al., 2025). This methodological approach aligns with the study's objective of exploring the personal and social dimensions of well-being rather than identifying numerical patterns or trends.

This study has several limitations. As a qualitative investigation, the findings are based on subjective accounts and may not fully represent the broader population of call center workers. While qualitative research prioritizes depth and contextual understanding, this emphasis inherently limits generalizability (Shenton, 2014). Furthermore, this study does not examine organizational policies, managerial strategies, or corporate decision-making processes in detail, as its focus remains on employees' lived experiences rather than institutional or structural factors. Personal variables, such as personality traits, individual life histories, and legal or policy-related considerations surrounding workplace stress, were also excluded, as these fall beyond the defined scope of the investigation. Clearly articulating these boundaries enhances the transparency and credibility of research (Shenton, 2014).

Additionally, because participation in the study was voluntary, there is a possibility of self-selection bias, wherein individuals with more salient or intense experiences may be more inclined to participate. This limitation is commonly associated with qualitative studies employing purposive and voluntary sampling methods (Purssell & McCrae, 2020). Despite these limitations, this study seeks to offer valuable insights into the social challenges faced by call center agents and how their work environment influences their relationships and overall well-being. While the findings may not be broadly generalizable, they can serve as a foundation for future studies and organizational initiatives aimed at improving the social well-being of call center employees.

II. METHOD

This section outlines the methods employed in the study, including the participants, research instruments and materials, as well as the study design and procedures.

➤ *Study Participants*

The participants were call center agents employed by Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) companies in Davao City. As such, they have certain commonalities, including engaging in customer-focused activities, such as answering incoming/outgoing phone calls and working primarily at night to service global clients. Overall, ten participants were included in the study. Five participants completed in-depth interviews (one from Full Potential Solutions Davao, one from Teleperformance Davao, one from Six Eleven, and two from iQor). Additionally, five participants from Six Eleven Global Services participated in a single-focus group discussion. The number of participants was determined based on the phenomenological nature of the research, which emphasized a rich lived experience over the sheer quantity of participants. This is consistent with the concept of data saturation (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007) and the participant range (Creswell, 2013) suggested for qualitative research studies.

The participants were selected through purposeful and snowball sampling to select those who had direct and sustained contact with customers as call center employees. Patton (2015) advocated purposeful sampling for qualitative studies because it provides researchers with the opportunity to locate the richest and most relevant data for the research question.

Additionally, snowball sampling was used, whereby participants referred to other potential participants within their professional network. Noy (2008) noted that snowball sampling is an especially useful method for gaining access to specific populations (such as call center employees) and is a standard practice in qualitative research for locating participants relevant to the study, but would otherwise be difficult to find.

The inclusion criteria for the study stated that only participants currently working as call center agents in Davao City, working night shifts with a customer-facing role, and having worked as a call center employee for at least one year (including previous and current employment) could participate in the study. Participants who were supervisors/managers, non-customer-facing back office personnel, those who had less than one year of experience, and those employed outside Davao City were excluded from the study because their job responsibilities and/or work environments differed substantially from those of the frontline agents and, therefore, would likely have different lived realities. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were made aware of their ability to discontinue participation in the study at any time without consequences, thereby adhering to the highest level of ethics.

Davao City was chosen as the study site because of the large growth in its BPO industry and the number of agents employed in night shift jobs. Davao City has emerged as a significant hub for the call center industry in Mindanao, and has developed a unique work environment that is influenced by the need to provide global services, changing schedules, and developing social dynamics. Therefore, Davao City is a suitable location for studying the social well-being of call center employees. As this study utilized a phenomenological methodology rather than a case study methodology, the participants' experiences were collectively analyzed to identify commonalities among them rather than treating each participant's experience as a separate unit.

➤ *Materials and Instrument*

In-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus groups (FGDs) were the key tools for this study, as they provided rich qualitative data that allowed for phenomenological exploration of the participants' lived experiences and shared perceptions. Additionally, the data generated from the IDIs allowed for the direct capture of individual participants' lived experiences, which is at the core of phenomenology. The FGDs facilitated the exploration of shared perceptions among participants, allowing for the validation of the emergent themes identified through the IDI analysis, and allowing for a collective context to be placed upon the individual participants' experiences as expressed through their lived experiences.

The instruments were specifically developed by the researcher to align with the specific phenomenological approach of the study, the three research questions that focused on participants' lived experiences, the strategies or mechanisms they utilized to cope with the challenges associated with their lived experiences, and their insights into

those challenges and how they may have been able to manage them.

These instruments were validated when they were reviewed by a panel of five validators, consisting of four faculty members from the University of Mindanao and one external validator, who was also a faculty member from Ateneo De Davao University. An average score of 8 out of 10 was assigned to each instrument based on a ten-point Likert Scale used to assess clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives (DeVellis, 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Likert, 1932). Feedback from the validators suggested the need to rephrase some of the questions that had potential ambiguity and to align the probe questions used during the IDIs and FGDs with the research objectives. These recommendations were systematically applied and integrated into the development of refined and finalized interviews and FGD guides. Therefore, the instruments were made more robust and appropriate for use as data collection tools (DeVellis, 2017).

➤ *Design and Procedure*

Hermeneutic Phenomenology (Van Manen, 2016) was chosen as the research methodology for this study because it focuses on the interpretation of the lived experiences of the participants instead of simply observing their behaviors. Hermeneutic phenomenology is especially well-suited for studies in social work because it can be utilized to understand human experiences, perceptions, and social phenomena in participants' everyday lives in the call center industry.

Participants selected for this study participated in face-to-face focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI). Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews will be conducted between May 04 and July 03, 2025. The focus group discussion took place on June 29, 2025, at the Six Eleven Canteen, Site A, and lasted for more than two hours. Prior to the beginning of the FGDs and IDIs, the researcher provided a document containing the letter to conduct a study signed by the adviser and the dean of the Professional School, Certificate of Approval from UMERC, Informed Consent Form, and a short introduction to explain the purpose of the discussion and assured participants that their responses would remain confidential and used exclusively for this study before signing the Informed Consent Form. Each session was audiotaped, along with handwritten notes about the participants' comments. The audio was transcribed after the sessions and reviewed prior to submission to the data analyst to allow for the discovery of emerging themes and concepts.

The data analysis followed Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method to systematically analyze participants' responses and discover themes and meanings. Techniques, such as open coding, were used during the first read-through of the transcripts to find the most significant comments made by participants, and axial coding was used to cluster these comments together to create theme groups. Finally, thematic analysis was used to refine the theme groups and synthesize them into a comprehensive explanation of the

participants' experiences related to the study's research questions.

To maintain trustworthiness, this study used Lincoln and Guba's (2006) criteria for qualitative research: credibility through the use of multiple methods (IDIs, FGDs, and field notes); dependability through the creation of an audit trail detailing the research process; confirmability through the use of reflexive and transparent analysis of the raw data; and transferability through the provision of a detailed description of the study environment and participants to enable readers to determine whether the results of the study are applicable to other study sites.

Throughout the study, ethical principles regarding participants' rights were upheld through the application of voluntary participation, confidentiality, informed consent, and responsible reporting. The study was conducted with the highest level of integrity and respect for participants. I acted in several ways as a researcher to complete this study, including as a data collector, observer, and interpreter. These capacities were achieved by conducting IDIs and FGDs, recording detailed field notes, and maintaining reflective journals. My nine years of experience working in the call center industry created a sense of familiarity and therefore enhanced the credibility of my ability to collect data, and my ability to adhere to ethical standards, and reflectively report my own biases as they relate to collecting and analyzing the data.

Prior to conducting the study, I received approval from the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) to conduct the study and was issued a certification number (UMERC-2025-131). All collected data were kept confidential and were used solely for study purposes. Participants were provided with a consent form prior to data collection and signed it to show their willingness to participate. Their identities were protected throughout the data collection process.

I submitted the study to a Turnitin check to verify the absence of plagiarism. I found no evidence of deceptive practices, false reporting of information, or misrepresentation of study results. I took measures to avoid engaging in scientific misconduct and properly reviewed the study to ensure that the reported data were accurate. Without my permission, no aspect of this study can be published or reported, unless by me and/or my advisor(s), who serve as co-authors and have the authority to print or present this study, as they both participate in the study and its resulting publication.

III. RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the lived experiences and social well-being of call center agents. The results were drawn from focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs), analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method, incorporated with thematic analysis, employing both open and axial coding. The discussion is organized into two main sections: the Demographic Profile of Participants and the 14 themes based

on data analysis. Regarding the first research question on the social well-being of call center agents, five themes emerged: relationship disruptions, workplace belongings, work strain, work-life balance, and learning and growth. For the second and third research questions, which focused on the challenges that call center agents face in enhancing their social well-being and coping mechanisms, four themes were identified: Skill

Development, Work Commitment, Social Support, and Lifestyle Adjustments. Finally, in response to the last research question on the insights and reflections that call center agents could share with their peers, five themes emerged: Health Benefits, Personal Growth, Guidance for Future Agents, and Resilience Practices.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Participants

A. The data were derived from two qualitative sources: (a) in-depth interviews conducted with five individual participants, and (b) one focus group discussion involving another five participants. In-depth Interview

Participant	Name	Age	Address	Years in BPO	Previous BPO Company	Current Work
1	IDI1	25	Barangay 11-B, Poblacion, Davao City	>3 years	Sutherland Global Services	SixEleven Global Services and Solutions
2	IDI2		—	>3 years	Aqcentria, Flatworld Philippines, FGC+Davao	SixEleven Global Services and Solutions
3	IDI3	26	Copper Street, San Rafael, Davao City	3 years	VXI, Teleperformance, Amazon (WAH)	VXI Centrale
4	IDI4	26	—	5 years	VXI, Awesome CX	Full Potential Solutions Davao
5	IDI5	34	Ecoland Talisay, Davao City	8 years	Sutherland Global Services, VXI Global Services	Teleperformance

B. In-Depth Interview

Participant	Name	Age	Address	Years in BPO	Previous BPO Company	Current Work
6	FGD1	27	Quirino St., Davao City	3 years	OAMPI	SixEleven Global Services and Solutions
7	FGD2	23	Ignacio Villamor St., Brgy. 11-B, Poblacion, Davao City	4 years	VXI	SixEleven Global Services and Solutions
8	FGD3	31	R. Castillo, Agdao, Davao City	3 years	Ibex, Iqor, VXI, Teleperformance	Iqor
9	FGD4	—	Panabo City	>2 years	Teleperformance	SixEleven Global Services and Solutions
10	FGD5	33	R. Castillo, Agdao, Davao City	6 years	Alorica, Iqor	Teleperformance

Table 2 Live Experiences and Daily Routines

Theme	Illustrative Statements
Relationship Disruptions	I started having conflicts with my friends since most of them work in pharmacies with morning shifts, so we have to schedule gatherings. (FGD1) I have less communication with my family because most of my time is spent at work, and whatever time I have left, I use to rest. (IDI1) Sometimes this job hinders socialization because it's so demanding; I often miss out on gatherings with friends and even family. (IDI2) It's hard to build relationships when you work the night shift. (FGD1)
Workplace Belonging	Working in a call center feels like you're part of a small community; your team becomes like a second family. (IDI3) Casual break-time chats built friendships and a sense of home. (IDI3) Yes—my team feels like soldiers, bearing stressful calls together. (IDI3) I became closer to colleagues when we shared similar frustrations and experiences. (FGD1)
Work Strain	I couldn't take time off to attend my father's funeral, which showed me how emotionally demanding this job can be. (FGD1) I still struggle with burnout; even if you learn to deal with it, the weight remains. (IDI2) Sleepiness at a 2 AM start, boredom from repetitive tasks, and communication barriers with customers speaking fast or with accents. (IDI4) Even with eight hours, there's still something missing; sleep feels incomplete. (FGD1)
Work-Life Balance	Yes—it felt like everything revolved around work, leaving almost no time for myself. (IDI1) Preparation for tasks extends my workday; I used to socialize but now focus on responsibilities, skipping personal activities. (FGD1)

	Of course—night shifts and childcare mean my child is at school when I get home. (IDI5) Not really; life won't be perfectly balanced, but I've learned to adjust and go with the flow. (IDI2)
Learning and Growth	Interacting with many people has made me more confident in social skills. (IDI1) Call center experience taught me adaptability as people come and go. (IDI2) Talking to customers' life stories helps improve my communication and social wellbeing. (IDI4) I improved my English communication and patience when dealing with customers. (IDI5)

➤ *Relationship Disruptions*

The demanding and irregular schedules associated with the call center environment negatively impact agents' social well-being by disrupting meaningful social connections. This is supported by participants' comments regarding their difficulty in communicating with family members and friends, resulting in a sense of isolation from others and a missed opportunity to participate in important family events. Notably, the participants expressed concerns, as reflected in the following statements.

“Mas gamay na gyud akong komunikasyon sa akong pamilya kay halos tanan nakong oras naa sa trabaho, unya kung naay mabilin, ipahuway na lang gyud nako. Usahay makababag gyud ning trabahoa sa pakig-socialize kay kapoy ug grabe ka demanding; daghan kog namiss nga tapok uban sa barkada ug bisan sa pamilya. Naa na pud koy mga conflict sa akong mga friends kay kadaghanan nila naa sa pharmacy nga morning shift, mao nga kinahanglan gyud mi mag-set ug schedule kung mag gathering” (IDI1, IDI2, FGD1)

I have less communication with my family because most of my time is spent at work, and whatever time I have left, I use to rest. Sometimes this job hinders socialization because it's so demanding; I often miss out on gatherings with friends and even family. I started having conflicts with my friends since most of them work in pharmacies with morning shifts, so we have to schedule gatherings.

According to Keyes (1998), this type of experience is consistent with Social Well-Being Theory, specifically in the area of social integration, which he identifies as a critical component of social well-being. Because of the lack of connection to others due to their work schedules, participants demonstrated a level of decreased social integration. In addition to providing an understanding of how work schedules can negatively impact social well-being, self-determination theory provides additional insight into why the negative effects of call center work are likely to be long-lasting. Specifically, it explains that the loss of relatedness resulting from irregular or non-traditional work schedules impedes the basic psychological need for relatedness. Therefore, the loss of relatedness is likely to lead to a decrease in participants' sense of belonging and a subsequent decrease in their internal motivation to engage in social activities.

The JD-R model expands upon the previous discussion on the negative effects of call center work by establishing a framework for understanding why these types of effects occur. Specifically, the JD-R model establishes a relationship between high levels of job demands, such as those created by working at night or having to adjust one's schedule to accommodate the needs of the organization, and low levels of job resources. As job demands increase, so do the levels of

emotional fatigue and strain experienced by employees, while the levels of job resources decrease. Therefore, the JD-R model supports the idea that call center employees who have to adjust their work schedules to accommodate the needs of the organization while also experiencing increased levels of job demands are likely to experience emotional fatigue and strain in their social relationships.

Tähkämö et al. (2018) demonstrated that night shifts disrupt participants' natural circadian rhythms and increase their stress, resulting in social isolation and strained personal relationships. Brough et al. (2020) found that when individuals had to spend more time on their jobs than on themselves and their families, there was less time available for them to interact with others in meaningful ways and spend quality time with their families. This results in relational imbalance and strain. Participants' comments about being unable to communicate with friends whose work schedules conflicted with theirs and missing family communications are examples of the previously mentioned concepts. These findings provide strong evidence of the need for organizations to develop policies and procedures that minimize the disruption caused by the nature of the call center work environment and allow agents to remain socially integrated. Examples of policies that may be implemented include flexible scheduling options and employee assistance programs that offer counseling services to address issues related to work-life balance and other social issues.

➤ *Workplace Belonging*

Workplace Belonging is emerging as an important social resource that buffers the negative effects of occupational demands on social well-being. The participants described the call center as a "second family" community where they developed camaraderie through shared experiences and received emotional support.

“Ang trabaho sa call center murag naa ra ka sa gamay nga barkada; ang team nimo murag ikaduhang pamilya na gyud. Sa mga chika-chika during break, didto mi nagkaila ug nagkasuod, murag naa ra ka sa balay. Mas nidikit ko sa akong mga kauban kay pareho mi ug mga kaagi ug mga reklamo sa trabaho”. (IDI3, IDI3, FGD1)

Working in a call center feels like you're part of a small community; your team becomes like a second family. Casual break-time chats built friendships and a sense of home. I became closer to colleagues when we shared similar frustrations and experiences

This theme relates to two aspects of Keyes's dimensions of social well-being: social acceptance and social actualization. Social acceptance refers to the extent to which a person feels accepted and valued as a part of a social group.

Feeling connected to others, having friends, and involvement in one's community are all forms of social acceptance. When people feel valued and supported by their social groups, they increase their overall sense of social well-being. Social actualization includes the ability to realize oneself. When people find ways to express themselves and achieve personal goals through their social connections, it also contributes to their overall social well-being.

The social connection that occurs with the development of relationships and feelings of belonging, as described in Self-Determination Theory, relates to the need for relatedness. Relatedness refers to the desire to be close to others and to have a sense of belonging. In many cases, individuals' relatedness needs are fulfilled by developing emotional bonds with coworkers, which results in a sense of psychological safety and resilience.

According to the JD-R model, social support acts as a key job resource that protects against the harmful effects of excessive job demands. Therefore, by reducing the extent of burnout experienced by employees and increasing their level of engagement, workplace belonging serves as a job resource that has both psychological and physical benefits for employees.

Research conducted by Kanwal et al. (2025) provides evidence supporting the protective role of workplace belonging. They reported that employees who had received high levels of social support at their place of employment were at lower risk of experiencing burnout and that their overall psychological well-being was higher than that of those who did not experience high levels of social support. The data collected support the theoretical lens by demonstrating that a strong sense of social unity and cohesion in the workplace can sustain agents' social identity and psychological health. The collected data highlight the importance of organizations in creating an environment that fosters a sense of team solidarity and peer support.

➤ *Work Strain*

Job strain is defined as the emotional exhaustion, burnout, and physical fatigue of call center employees resulting from prolonged high levels of job demand, including night shifts, working extended hours, and performing repetitive tasks, as per the participants' experiences.

“Wala gyud ko katake ug leave para maka-attend sa lubong sa akong papa, ug didto nako na-realize kung unsa ka emotionally demanding ning trabahoa. Hangtod karon, naa gihapon ko'y giatubang nga burnout; bisan pa og maanad ka, naa gihapon ang kabug-aton. Lisod kaayo kung alas-dos sa kadlawon ang sulod, antok kaayo, tapos boring pa gyud kay balik-balik ra ang buhaton. Naa pud times nga lisod makig-istorya sa customers kay paspas kaayo sila mutingog o lain og accent” (FGD1, IDI2, IDI4).

I couldn't take time off to attend my father's funeral, which showed me how emotionally demanding this job can be. I still struggle with burnout; even if you learn to deal with it, the weight remains. Sleepiness at a 2 AM start, boredom from

repetitive tasks, and communication barriers with customers speaking fast or with accents.

The participants' experience of missing important life events and sleep deprivation demonstrates the impact of ongoing work pressures on their social and emotional health. According to Keyes' (2007) Social Well-Being Theory, these types of strains lead to a reduction in social integration and contribution, as emotional depletion limits employees' ability to meaningfully participate in social roles. According to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this type of ongoing strain can also limit employees' sense of autonomy and competence, thus limiting their psychological health.

Research conducted by Jacobs (2024) indicated the importance of developing occupational health interventions to reduce burnout in high-stress workplaces. Arinta and Maryam (2022) indicated the importance of providing opportunities for rest and recovery to ensure that employees have the capacity to maintain their work and social well-being. Therefore, this study's findings validate the theoretical framework developed by demonstrating how excessive job demands negatively impact employees' social well-being and support the development of organizational strategies to manage employees' job demands with adequate resources to promote their mental health and social engagement.

The findings of this study highlight the need for organizations to provide workload management and emotionally supportive strategies to promote employees' social functioning and prevent social withdrawal.

➤ *Work-Life Balance*

The work-life balance theme focuses on the impact of conflicting professional and personal demands on the ability of call center workers to participate socially and be coherent in their social roles. As shown in the following narratives:

“Oo, murag tanan na lang umiikot sa trabaho, halos wala na gyud koy time para sa akong kaugalingon. Tungod sa night shift ug pag-atiman sa bata, naa na sa eskwelahan akong anak pag-abot nako sa balay”. (IDI1, IDI5)

Yes—it felt like everything revolved around work, leaving almost no time for myself. Night shifts and childcare mean my child is at school when I get home.

As noted by Keyes (2002), social integration and a sense of coherence are important factors in achieving overall well-being. When work interferes with an individual's personal time, it hinders his/her ability to engage in the social world, thereby reducing their overall quality of life. According to the Self-Determination Theory, this interference frustrates the need for autonomy and relatedness, leading to reduced motivation and poor psychological outcomes. As described by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, work-life imbalance represents a major source of stress that depletes the personal resources needed for social engagement and recovery. Despite the difficulties experienced by participants due to work-life imbalance, they exhibited high levels of resilience by utilizing adaptive coping strategies, including

lowering their expectations and "going with the flow," indicating high levels of self-regulation.

Research studies by Mori et al. (2023) have shown that work-life imbalance negatively affects an individual's level of social participation and increases levels of psychological distress because of the intrusion of job demands into one's personal time, consistent with Keyes' (2002) definitions of social integration and coherence. In addition to describing the effects of work-life imbalance, Self-Determination Theory explains that the frustration of relatedness and autonomy needs results in lower motivation and poorer mental health outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The JD-R Model describes the drain on an individual's personal resources caused by work-life imbalance and states that it undermines an individual's ability to engage socially and recover from the stress of work. Shanker (2022) found that flexible work arrangements and supportive organizational cultures can reduce the negative effects of work-life imbalance by allowing individuals to integrate their work and personal life domains. Flexible work arrangements not only help to prevent social isolation but also contribute to promoting an individual's social well-being by satisfying their psychological needs and building resilience, as seen in the participants' stories.

➤ *Learning and Growth*

Learning and Growth provides a positive component to social well-being by showing how call center work leads to personal development, particularly in terms of communication skills, flexibility, and social confidence, as shown in their statement.

“Tungod sa pakig-istorya sa daghang tawo, mas nisaka akong confidence sa social skills. Ang experience sa call center nagtudlo gyud nako unsaon pag-adapt kay sige ra man ug ilis-ilis ang mga tawo. Ang pagpaminaw sa mga life story sa customers nakatabang gyud sa pag-improve sa akong communication ug social well-being. Naka-improve pud akong English ug pasensya sa pag-atubang sa lain-laing klase sa customers” (IDI1, IDI2, IDI4, IDI5)

Interacting with many people has made me more confident in social skills. Call center experience taught me adaptability as people come and go. Talking to customers' life stories helps improve my communication and social wellbeing. I improved my English communication and patience when dealing with customers.

This theme extends Keyes' components of social contribution and social acceptance, as developing skills will enable the agent to be a more effective participant in social interactions. According to the self-determination theory, competence and development are basic psychological needs. According to the JD-R model, skill development is an important job resource that increases employee engagement and reduces the impact of occupational stress. The participants reported improvements in English proficiency and patience in the workplace, illustrating this process and supporting the notion that despite occupational challenges, opportunities for learning contribute positively to social well-being.

Learning and Growth have a positive role in increasing social well-being through personal development in terms of communication skills, flexibility, and social confidence. Studies from Du Plessis and Rabie (2025) and customer-facing industries have demonstrated that acquiring skills in communication and interpersonal abilities develops employees' social competence and engagement and, therefore, corresponds to Keyes' social contribution and social acceptance. The development of these skills also allows workers to participate in social interactions more effectively in their roles and other social contexts; thus, they reinforce their social identity and acceptance. According to the self-determination theory, the fulfillment of the need for competence and development is one of the most important psychological needs, and numerous studies have demonstrated that providing employees with ongoing opportunities to develop and learn about their jobs enhances their motivation, job satisfaction, and overall psychological well-being.

Moreover, according to the JD-R model, developing skills is one of the most important job resources for promoting employee engagement at work and for buffering the adverse effects of occupational stress. For instance, call center employees who were able to develop language proficiency and patience demonstrated higher levels of resilience and lower levels of burnout, indicating that learning is a protective function against burnout. These studies collectively indicate that, despite the challenging nature of many of today's work environments, learning and development substantially contribute to social well-being by satisfying employees' psychological needs and enabling them to acquire adaptive behaviors.

The social Well-Being of Call Center Agents, as illustrated in Table 2 (Live Experiences and Daily Routines), is shaped by a dynamic relationship between several factors that affect their social integration, social acceptance, and social contributions. Relationship Disruption is an important factor for call center agents because of the demanding nature of their work schedule. In addition to the irregularity of schedules, the fact that many agents are required to work night shifts creates difficulties in their ability to communicate and connect with family and friends. As a result of this disruption, many agents reported feeling isolated and missing out on social opportunities, including major social events and milestone celebrations; therefore, they compromised social integration and social connection, which are essential to overall social well-being.

On the other hand, agents have been able to establish strong bonds in the workplace. These relationships provide a great deal of emotional support, a sense of belonging, and a safe environment for emotional expressions. The social cohesion that develops among agents in the workplace has provided them with a source of strength and helps buffer the negative effects of the occupational demands associated with working in a call center environment.

Work Strain represents the emotional exhaustion and burnout that result from agents working long hours, performing repetitive tasks, and meeting the demands of their

job over a prolonged period. This work-related stress reduces agents' ability to participate in social activities and can negatively affect their social function; therefore, it illustrates the vulnerability of social well-being when individuals face excessive work pressure. Work-life balance illustrates the constant struggle between fulfilling agents' work obligations and managing their personal lives. Often, the demands of their work obligations prevent them from engaging in social activities or participating in community organizations. However, as illustrated throughout the study, many agents display resilience and employ adaptive coping mechanisms to manage the stress associated with their jobs and continue to connect socially with others.

Finally, agents have the opportunity to develop personally and professionally in areas such as communication,

adaptability, and social confidence as a result of their work in call centers. Therefore, as agents improve their skills and gain confidence in their ability to perform their jobs, they also have increased opportunities to increase their social contribution and acceptance, ultimately enhancing their social well-being.

In summary, the five themes presented above illustrate the complex and dynamic nature of social well-being, specifically for call center agents, as follows: agents' social well-being is affected by occupational demands that create obstacles to developing social relationships, and by personal and workplace resources that help promote social integration and mental health. Ultimately, this study's theoretical framework emphasizes the role of organizational support and individual resilience in promoting the social well-being of call center agents.

Table 3 Challenges and Coping Mechanisms

Theme	Illustrative Statements
Skill Development	I've learned the importance of collaborating with team members. (FGD1) Interacting with many people has made me more confident in social skills. (IDI1) Call center experience taught me adaptability as people come and go. (IDI2) Business Processing Outsourcing work improved my English and patience when dealing with customers. (IDI5)
Work Commitment	We missed special events but saw the importance of time management. (FGD1) Client feedback broadened my outlook on opportunities beyond stress. (IDI1) Experiencing support in Nesting made me value coaching and second chances. (IDI2) Convenience of work-from-home and good pay kept me committed. (IDI4) Business Processing Outsourcing income allowed family outings. (IDI5)
Social Support	I became closer to colleagues when we shared similar frustrations and experiences. (FGD1) I built good relationships by sharing knowledge and supporting each other. (FGD1) Support eased tension and anxiety, improving my work-life balance. (IDI4) Family comfort helps me rest and recharge after work. (IDI5) Casual friendships at work make me feel at home and prevent loneliness. (IDI3)
Lifestyle Adjustments	Missing social gatherings due to shift differences. (FGD1) Schedule changes every 1–2 months disrupt social time. (IDI4) I stopped church attendance and gym; I stay home and sleep to manage energy. (IDI1) I miss out on gatherings, but I coordinate meetups once or twice a month. (IDI2) I can't spend quality time with family because they sleep when I'm awake. (RID15)

➤ Skill Development

The participants reported that the demanding environment of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry was a source of developing valuable skills, such as communication, collaboration, and adaptability, as shown in the narrative.

“Nakat-on ko unsa ka importante ang pakigtambang ug pakig-collab sa mga kauban sa team. Tungod sa sige'g pakig-istorya sa daghang tawo, mas nisaka akong confidence sa akong social skills. Ang experience sa call center nagtudlo gyud nako nga mahimong flexible ug dali maka-adjust kay sige ra man ug ilisanay ang mga tawo. Sa BPO nga trabaho, mas ni-improve akong English ug akong pasensya sa pag-atubang sa lain-lainng klase sa customers” (FGD1, IDI1, IDI2, IDI5)

I've learned the importance of collaborating with team members. Interacting with many people has made me more confident in social skills. Call center experience taught me adaptability as people come and go. Business Processing

Outsourcing work improved my English and patience when dealing with customers.

The study by Andelković et al. (2025) highlighted the need for soft skills to be developed in service-based industries such as BPO, which require effective communication, teamwork, and problem-solving for organizations to achieve success. Tagoon-Angeles and Quiambao (2024) found that among call-center employees, emotional and social intelligence significantly influenced their behaviors, indicating that daily interactions in the BPO role develop these competencies. Furthermore, Atento (2025) and Lazo (2025) pointed out that empathy and emotional intelligence are important for providing good customer service and solving problems for customers, both of which are important for delivering high-quality services. In addition, Dynamic Business Outsourcing Solutions (2026) argues that adaptability and the desire to continually learn are two key competencies that allow BPO employees to successfully respond to changes made by clients and adapt to changing working conditions.

The Skill Development theme reflects improvements in social integration and contribution by participants, gaining confidence and adaptability from workplace interactions. The Skill Development theme demonstrates that employees view themselves as effective contributors to their professional and social communities and, therefore, fulfill the dimensions of social well-being by creating meaningful relationships and developing competencies.

As supported by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the intrinsic motivation to develop collaboration and communication competences aligns with the psychological needs for competence and relatedness that promote personal growth and job satisfaction. The JD-R model also places the development of skill competencies as a resource that can mitigate job demands, help employees deal with stressful aspects of their job, and maintain job engagement. Therefore, Skill Development serves as a fundamental resource that contributes to social well-being and provides the foundation for long-term motivation and resilience in occupations characterized by high levels of job demands.

➤ *Work Commitment*

While there are many potential barriers for businesses to engage in business process outsourcing, most of those interviewed had a strong sense of commitment and dedication to their jobs. They were able to clearly articulate the ways in which they benefited financially from the BPO industry and the opportunities for professional development and experience it offered.

“Daghan mi’g namiss nga mga espesyal nga okasyon, pero didto pud namo nakita unsa ka importante ang time management. Ang feedback sa clients nakapadako sa among panan-aw nga naa pa diay lain oportunidad gawas sa stress. Sa Nesting, tungod sa support nga among na-experience, mas na-appreciate nako ang coaching ug ang paghatag ug second chances. Ang ka-convenient sa work-from-home ug nindot nga sweldo mao’y nakapapabilin gyud nako sa trabaho. Tungod sa kita sa BPO, naka-enjoy pud mi ug mga laag uban sa pamilya” (FGD1, IDI1, IDI2, IDI4 IDI5)

We missed special events but saw the importance of time management. Client feedback broadened my outlook on opportunities beyond stress. Experiencing support in Nesting made me value coaching and second chances. Convenience of work-from-home and good pay kept me committed. Business Processing Outsourcing income allowed family outings.

According to Dela Torre-Gatuslao (2025), commitment to work is one of the key aspects of success in the BPO industry, and she states that career advancement and a positive work environment are the primary motivators for employee engagement and retention. Briones et al. (2025) studied the attitudes of BPO employees in the Philippines and demonstrated a significant and positive correlation between job satisfaction (including perceptions of competitive pay, clear paths to promotion, and supportive supervision) and an employee's intention to continue working for their employer.

Additionally, research conducted by Fatma et al. (2025) examined the influence of factors such as career opportunity, job security, and work-life balance on retention in the BPO industry and found that all three variables positively impacted employees' level of commitment and negatively impacted their intent to leave. Villarosa (2025) also supports these findings by indicating that when organizations provide a supportive work environment, offer opportunities for employee development, and implement programs designed to support the overall well-being of employees, they promote organizational commitment and loyalty.

The concept of work commitment falls within the dimensions of social cohesion and social actualization in Social Well-Being Theory and represents an aspect of work that provides employees with a sense of purpose and value, regardless of obstacles. Participants' statements about managing their time effectively and receiving feedback from clients reflect how employees develop a sense of belonging and positive social integration through meaningful contributions to their work. Employees who have developed a strong commitment to their work can be explained using Self-Determination Theory. To meet their need for competence and their need for relatedness, employees require external validation and coaching that enables them to feel intrinsically motivated and emotionally attached to their work.

The JD-R model describes commitment as an outcome of the interaction between employees' experiences with their work demands and the resources available to them. Flexible work options and supportive feedback are critical resources that enable employees to maintain their engagement levels while reducing burnout levels. Therefore, this theme illustrates the interactive nature between employees' psychological needs and the structural and environmental characteristics of their workplace and demonstrates the theoretical lens that commitment is both an affective and behavioral response contingent upon the degree to which employees experience high levels of social well-being and have access to sufficient resources.

➤ *Social Support*

The importance of social relationships in participants' coping strategies was also clearly demonstrated by their reliance on co-workers and family members for emotional and moral support.

“Mas nagkaduol ko sa akong mga kauban sa trabaho kay pareho mi ug mga kalisod ug kaagi. Nakabuuild ko ug nindot nga relasyon pinaagi sa pag-share ug kahibalo ug pagtinabangay. Tungod sa support, nabawasan akong tension ug anxiety, ug mas na-balance nako ang work ug personal life. Dako pud kaayo’g tabang ang pamilya kay sila akong pahulayan ug source sa kusog human sa trabaho. Ang mga barkada sa trabaho, bisag simple ra, makapafeel gyud nako nga murag naa ra ko sa balay ug dili ko mag-inusara” (FGD1, FGD1, IDI4, IDI5, IDI3)

Social Support I became closer to colleagues when we shared similar frustrations and experiences. I built good relationships by sharing knowledge and supporting each

other. Support eased tension and anxiety, improving my work-life balance. Family comfort helps me rest and recharge after work. Casual friendships at work make me feel at home and prevent loneliness.

According to Jolly et al. (2020), previous research has shown that supportive co-worker relations can mitigate the negative impacts of high job demands, decrease levels of emotional exhaustion, and improve psychological well-being in service roles where emotional labor is prevalent. Accordingly, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) defined social support as an important job resource in the Job Demands – Resources Model, enabling employees to deal with stress and develop resiliency in high-demand work environments. In addition, Yucel (2020) identified that positive social support from both inside and outside the workplace reduces work-related stress and improves work-family balance and job satisfaction, reinforcing the idea that coworkers and family can provide mutual forms of emotional support. Furthermore, Okojie et al. (2023) stated that strong social support networks are associated with higher levels of psychological resilience and overall well-being, implying that employees who maintain both work-based and non-work-based social relationships may be able to better cope with stressors of employment.

Social Support relates directly to Keyes' (2011) theory of social well-being by providing opportunities for employees to achieve social integration, acceptance, and actualization, all of which are vital to the development of psychological and emotional health. Examples of participants' experiences of sharing frustration, exchanging knowledge, and experiencing emotional comfort demonstrate the ways in which workplace relationships can foster a sense of belonging and reduce stress, which is supported by the Buffering Hypothesis.

Additionally, Self-Determination Theory provides further support for this by defining relatedness as one of the three basic psychological needs fulfilled by supportive peer and family networks, which enable employees to remain motivated and experience well-being. The JD-R Model defines social support as a key job resource that buffers the negative effects of high job demands and enhances employees' ability to develop resilience and work-life balance. Overall, the themes discussed above emphasize the central role that interpersonal connections play in developing social well-being and supporting employees' mental health while working in stressful or challenging environments.

➤ *Lifestyle Adjustments*

Participants reported multiple alterations in their lifestyles due to demanding work schedules and managing work-related responsibilities, including sleep patterns, social habits, and daily routines.

“Daghan gyud kog namiss nga tapok tungod sa lain-lain nga shift. Kada 1–2 ka bulan sigeg usab ang schedule, mao nga gubot kaayo ang oras para sa social life. Nahunong na ko ug simba ug pag-gym; mas pili-on na lang nako nga magpuyo sa balay ug matulog para lang makaipon ug kusog. Bisan og daghan kog namiss nga gatherings, mag-effort gihapon ko mag-coordinate ug kitaay bisan once or twice a month. Lisod

pud kaayo maka-spend ug quality time sa pamilya kay matulog sila kung ako mata pa” (FGD1, ID14, ID11, ID12, RID15)

Missing social gatherings due to shift differences. Schedule changes every 1–2 months disrupt social time. I stopped church attendance and gym; I stay home and sleep to manage energy. I miss out on gatherings, but I coordinate meetups once or twice a month. I can't spend quality time with family because they sleep when I'm awake.

The literature shows that employees working non-traditional shifts are required to make substantial lifestyle adjustments when working in jobs that operate 24 hours per day, seven days a week. As documented by Kervezee et al. (2020) and Ropponen et al. (2021), employees who work non-traditional work schedules often alter their sleep cycles, leisure activities, and social interactions in response to the demands placed on them by their employment, which can lead to disruptions in their circadian rhythms and feelings of social disconnection. These lifestyle adjustments are necessary to ensure that employees can maintain productivity in their jobs; however, an article titled “Working Conditions and Sustainable Work, 2021” shows that these same adjustments can negatively impact employees' perceptions of work-life balance and increase their risk of feeling socially isolated.

However, employees exhibited flexibility, acceptability, and proactive planning in their daily lives, which reflects the coping strategies found in occupational psychology literature. McKinnon et al. (2021) stated that adaptive behaviors, such as time management, prioritizing tasks, and strategically engaging in social behavior, have been associated with higher levels of psychological resilience, lower levels of occupational stress, and better quality of work performance. Lifestyle Adjustments reflected employees' ability to establish and maintain work-life boundaries and were consistent with the Keyes dimensions of social integration and social acceptance, where disruptions to social participation negatively impacted overall well-being. Employees sacrifice their social and recreational time to meet work demands, illustrating the conflict between meeting work obligations and maintaining social well-being.

Self-Determination Theory frames employees' lifestyle adjustments in terms of autonomy and relatedness needs, and limited social interaction negatively impacts their sense of psychological fulfillment. The JD-R model illustrated that employees' lifestyle adjustments were responses to high levels of job demands and limited resources, and that employees used coping mechanisms to deal with job demands and limited resources that negatively impacted their social and personal well-being. Overall, this theme illustrates the complexities of employees' work schedules and social connections to overall well-being. Employers should develop policies that support employees' lifestyle needs to promote their overall social well-being.

The four major categories of challenges faced by call center agents in improving their social well-being are Skill Development, Work Commitment, Social Support, and Lifestyle Adjustments. These categories reflect how the work

environment of call center agents (the high level of social interaction, emotional labor, and difficulty maintaining work-life boundaries) affects their social well-being. Skill Development is both a source of stress for agents and a means to reduce stress. Agents require a high degree of skill (adaptability, collaboration, and communication) to handle various customer interactions and change team dynamics. Their continued education and training provides opportunities for agents to engage with others, contribute to the organization, and build confidence and feelings of competence. However, the constant need to develop new skills in an environment characterized by stress can be detrimental to the social well-being of agents. Therefore, there needs to be strong intrinsic motivation and organizational support to allow this development to continue.

Work Commitment is a reflection of the conflict between being dedicated to one’s job and sacrificing one’s personal life for that job. Often, agents will have to miss important social and family events because they cannot get out of their schedules or because of the workload they have been assigned. This can lead to social disintegration and hinder social actualization; however, the agent has the potential to maintain his/her commitment to the job if intrinsic motivators are present, such as positive client feedback, coaching, and flexibility in work arrangements (i.e., work from home). All these factors provide a valuable resource for the agent to use to reduce the impact of job demands on his/her commitment to the job.

Social Support is a buffer that helps protect against the negative aspects of job stress and promotes agents’ overall social well-being. Developing close working relationships with colleagues, developing a knowledge-sharing culture, and

providing emotional comfort all help alleviate anxiety and create a sense of community among agents. In addition to having a supportive group of coworkers, many agents receive additional support from their families, which helps to replenish their psychological resources and provides them with a balance in terms of work and non-work life. All of these social supports are crucial to agents who may experience isolation from working irregular hours and experience high levels of job demands, and will help agents stay resilient and mentally healthy.

Lifestyle Adjustments reflect the dynamic relationship that call center agents constantly negotiate between the demands of their jobs and personal lives. As agents negotiate, it is common for them to give up on social participation and leisure activities. Irregular schedules and shift changes prevent agents from attending social functions, attending church, and participating in family activities. This makes it difficult for the agents to achieve social integration and acceptance. Some ways in which agents cope with these challenges include arranging occasional meetings with friends and/or family members and making sure to take breaks and rest when possible. However, these coping mechanisms highlight some of the limitations of agents’ social well-being.

In summary, the four major categories illustrate that call center agents’ social well-being is continually affected by the interrelated elements of skill enhancement, work commitment, social support, and lifestyle management. The various coping mechanisms included in skill development and social support help diminish the negative outcomes caused by the demands of the job; however, the ongoing adjustments made to their lifestyles indicate the continuing struggle for agents to achieve overall well-being.

Table 4 Insights and Reflections

Theme	Illustrative Statements
Health Benefits	Business Processing Outsourcing offers health insurance for agents and their families, which is encouraging. (IDI5) Maintaining healthy relationships and self-care is essential for overall wellbeing. (IDI4) Whenever exhausted, take a break and rest; prioritize self-care. (IDI5)
Personal Growth	I enhanced my communication skills and learned new technical tools. (FGD1) I improved my English skills and night-shift adaptability. (IDI1) I’m impatient but learn to calm myself quickly and not hold grudges. (IDI2) I learned to adapt to changes and challenges, becoming stronger. (IDI4) I mastered time management that I lacked in school. (FGD1)
Guidance for Future Agents	Be open to rejection and changes in the Business Processing Outsourcing industry. (FGD1) Clarify your life goals, aim for growth beyond agent roles, and view Business Processing Outsourcing as a stepping stone. (IDI1) Don’t stay beyond 3–5 years; it’s draining—use it to gain experience but plan to move on. (IDI2) If you lack patience or dislike communication, don’t pursue it; if passionate, you’ll do well. (IDI4) Watch English shows or read English books to improve language for Business Processing Outsourcing. (IDI5)
Resilience Practices	Time management is key; schedule breaks and social activities, even online, to preserve relationships. (FGD1) Consistency in small communications like messages and check-ins maintains bonds. (IDI1) Separate work from personal life to protect your sanity. (IDI2) Enjoy life, never let stress control you, and appreciate every moment. (IDI4) I learned that an imbalanced life isn’t healthy and that discipline in time management is necessary. (IDI1)

➤ *Health Benefits and Self-Care*

Participants acknowledged that physical and mental health are important for sustainable performance, and many

participants appreciated their employer's provision of health insurance and medical benefits as elements of security and minimizing health-related stress.

“Ang Business Processing Outsourcing naghatag ug health insurance para sa mga ahente ug ilang pamilya, nga dako kaayog tabang ug encouragement. Importante gyud ang pagmintinar ug healthy nga relasyon ug pag-atiman sa kaugalingon para sa overall well-being. Kung kapoy na kaayo, pahulay sa ug take a break; unaha gyud ang self-care” (IDI5, IDI4, IDI5)

Business Processing Outsourcing offers health insurance for agents and their families, which is encouraging. Maintaining healthy relationships and self-care is essential for overall wellbeing. Whenever exhausted, take a break and rest; prioritize self-care.

These observations support the broader research on the growing significance of health consciousness in performance-driven workplaces. Eurofound (2021) and the World Health Organization (2020) have reported that workplace health programs and insurance contribute to employees' overall well-being and reduce the risk of stress-related health problems.

In addition to organization-based health benefits, self-care practices were identified as critical for employees who used them as coping mechanisms. Sonnentag et al. (2021) found that adequate rest, physical activity, and managing stress help employees who have heavy workloads or irregular schedules from experiencing the negative impacts of the high workload/irregular schedule and improve their resiliency. McKinnon et al. (2021) and Nielsen et al. (2020) reported that encouraging employees to engage in proactive health behaviors will support employee productivity in the short term; however, they also support long-term occupational sustainability. They noted that employees in high-pressure occupations, such as Business Processing Outsourcing, can be resilient if they can maintain both their physical and psychological resources.

The Health Benefits theme is consistent with Keyes's (1998) Social Well-Being Theory. This theory defines social well-being as comprising two components: social integration and social contribution. As previously stated, the BPO agent's use of health insurance and self-care creates a sense of security and belonging in the organization, creating social well-being through the support of the agents' physical and mental health.

According to the Self-Determination Theory, health benefits support employees' need for competence and autonomy, thus fulfilling their basic psychological needs. The JD-R model places these findings in context by indicating that health benefits are one of the most significant types of job resources that can act as a buffer against job demands to decrease strain and promote employee resilience. Therefore, in addition to financially supporting employees' health benefits, organizations should protect employees' social and psychological well-being in a highly stressful work environment.

➤ *Personal Growth*

Participants were proud of the ways they had grown as a result of their journey in Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO), noting that they developed greater patience, their

communication skills grew, and they matured in terms of how they dealt with pressure.

“Na-improve gyud nako akong communication skills ug nakat-on ko ug bag-ong technical tools. Mas nindot na pud akong English ug naanad na ko sa night shift. Medyo dali ko ma-irritate sauna, pero nakat-on na ko unsaon pagpakalma sa akong kaugalingon ug dili na magdala ug sama sa dugay. Nakat-on pud ko mo-adjust sa mga changes ug challenges, mao nga mas ni-lig-on ko. Ug ang time management nga wala gyud nako ma-master sa eskwelahan, naa ra diay nako makuha diri sa trabaho” (FGD1, IDI1, IDI2, IDI4, FGD1)

I enhanced my communication skills and learned new technical tools. I improved my English skills and night-shift adaptability. I'm impatient but learn to calm myself quickly and not hold grudges. I learned to adapt to changes and challenges, becoming stronger. I mastered time management that I lacked in school.

These results are similar to those of other studies on occupational learning and resilience, which indicate that difficult work environments may provide opportunities for personal development, control over emotions, and coping strategies (Ahsan & Tahir, 2025). Studies have found that employee development methods and strategies to build employee resilience lead to increased flexibility and the ability to manage stress in stressful work environments (Ibrahim & Hussein, 2024). Additionally, there is evidence that employees who effectively manage workplace stress develop important psychological resources that support their personal and professional growth. Other contemporary studies have indicated that emotional intelligence, including self-regulation and adaptive responses, helps build an individual's ability to manage pressure and develop problem-solving skills in a work environment. Genuba and Dura (2024) researched Positive Psychological Capital and demonstrated that employees' personal resources, including resilience, self-efficacy, and adaptability, are related to higher levels of well-being and performance in high-demand work environments, providing additional support for the idea that challenging jobs provide employees with opportunities for broad social and emotional well-being.

The Personal Growth theme is aligned with the concepts of competence and relatedness in Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2001), in which competence and relatedness are key to motivating individuals to pursue tasks and activities that promote intrinsic motivation and growth. The participants reported improvements in technical skills, communication skills, and emotional regulation, which illustrates the fulfillment of these needs and facilitates personal development within the BPO context.

Additionally, this theme is aligned with Social Well-Being Theory in demonstrating how employees' experiences in the workplace contribute to social actualization and social contribution, as employees develop skills that will improve their ability to perform their roles in the organization and ultimately in society. According to the Job Demands Resource model, personal growth is a result of employees' ability to

manage job demands effectively and acquire new resources (such as skills and adaptive strategies), which leads to an increase in job engagement and resilience. These findings support the theoretical notion that growth-oriented coping mechanisms allow employees to convert challenges into opportunities for growth and development, and therefore, continue to maintain long-term well-being.

➤ *Guidance for Future Agents*

Participants provided recommendations to future call center representatives based on their personal experience, knowledge, and insight into the business processing-outsourcing industry. Representatives stressed the importance of perseverance, patience, and the establishment of clearly defined short- and long-term career objectives.

“Kinahanglan open ka sa rejection ug mga changes sa BPO industry. Klaroha imong mga goals sa kinabuhi, ayaw ra hunong sa pagka-agent, ug tan-awa ang BPO nga stepping stone ra para sa mas dako nga growth. Ayaw pagdugay ug sobra sa 3–5 ka tuig kay makadrain gyud siya—gamita ra para sa experience unya plano na dayon ang sunod nga lakang. Kung kulang kag pasensya o dili ka ganahan makig-istoriya, ayaw na lang sudla; pero kung naa kay passion, molampos gyud ka. Tan-awa ug English shows o basa ug English books para mas mo-improve imong English kung mosud ka sa BPO”. (FGD1, IDI1, IDI2, IDI4, IDI5)

Be open to rejection and changes in the Business Processing Outsourcing industry. Clarify your life goals, aim for growth beyond agent roles, and view Business Processing Outsourcing as a stepping stone. Don't stay beyond 3–5 years; it's draining—use it to gain experience but plan to move on. If you lack patience or dislike communication, don't pursue it; if you're passionate, you'll do well. Watch English shows or read English books to improve language for Business Processing Outsourcing.

The recommendations illustrate the participants' realistic perceptions of the demanding nature of business processing outsourcing and the associated opportunities for professional and financial advancement. Research on career development and occupational socialization conducted by Yang (2025) and Luwei and Huimin (2024) indicates that early career experiences provide individuals with key learning opportunities regarding skill acquisition, identity development, and strategic planning of their professional career trajectory, and that proactive engagement in career identity and passion supports persistence and adaptability during early workforce transition periods.

Conversely, studies by Ueno et al. (2024) and Conceição and Palma-Moreira (2025) on occupational stress and burnout indicate that prolonged exposure to high-demand occupations, such as those common in service-oriented work environments, may result in considerable psychological strain and decreased overall well-being if not supported by sufficient resources and coping mechanisms (e.g., job demands-resources frameworks).

In addition, research specifically related to the business processing outsourcing industry by Marshall et al. (2024) and Regoso et al. (2023) demonstrates that there is a strong correlation between workplace stressors and emotional exhaustion and/or intent to leave the call center employment position; therefore, it is recommended that future call center representatives engage in strategic career planning and receive adequate well-being support. The participants' recommendations to treat outsourcing as a means to grow and develop new skills while reducing the potential negative effects on health, satisfaction, and long-term career viability are consistent with these findings.

The theme of "Guidance for Future Agents" is predicated on the adaptive processes described by the JD-R Model, which emphasizes the importance of proactive coping and career adaptability in managing fluctuations inherent in job demands. The participants' recommendations to accept rejection, establish clear goals, and perceive business process outsourcing positions as stepping stones toward other opportunities illustrate their understanding of the necessity of being psychologically flexible and strategically managing their resources, consistent with the focus of Self-Determination Theory on autonomy and competence. Call center agents are encouraged to take responsibility for their career paths and develop skills that reflect their values and capacities. This aligns with Social Well-Being Theory's focus on social integration, as guidance promotes the maintenance of connections and support networks that foster resiliency. This theme illustrates the significance of informed agency and environmental awareness in supporting both well-being and career advancement within the dynamic and unpredictable environment of the business processing outsourcing industry.

➤ *Resilience Practices*

The participants expressed that resilient people must make an effort to build their resilience every day by making conscious decisions to prioritize their time effectively, develop and maintain social connections, and be aware of their thoughts to maintain a positive outlook. The participants' views are supported by current research on occupational resilience, which describes resilience not as an innate ability but rather as something that can be developed throughout one's career using various techniques or strategies that incorporate personal characteristics and social support.

“Importante kaayo ang time management; i-schedule gyud ang pahulay ug social activities, bisan online lang, para dili maputol ang relasyon. Ang kanunay nga gamayng komunikasyon sama sa pag-message ug pag-check-in makapapadayon sa bonding. Bulaga ang trabaho ug personal nga kinabuhi para maprotektahan imong sanity. Enjoya ang kinabuhi, ayaw tugoti nga ang stress maoy mugunit sa imo, ug i-appreciate ang matag higayon. Nakat-on ko nga dili healthy ang dili balanse nga kinabuhi, ug kinahanglan gyud ang disiplina sa pagdumala sa oras”. (FGD1, IDI1, IDI2, IDI4, IDI1)

Time management is key; schedule breaks and social activities, even online, to preserve relationships. Consistency in small communications like messages and check-ins

maintains bonds. Separate work from personal life to protect your sanity. Enjoy life, never let stress control you, and appreciate every moment. I learned that an imbalanced life isn't healthy and that discipline in time management is necessary.

Recent research by Ibrahim and Hussein (2024) and Robinson et al. (2024) found that having a high level of resilience contributes positively to employee engagement and job satisfaction; however, this is dependent on whether the organization has implemented any strategies to encourage employee engagement and job satisfaction and/or whether the individual uses effective time management practices.

Furthermore, research conducted by Karadaş and Duran (2021) and Genuba and Dura (2024) demonstrated consistently positive correlations between the use of social support, workplace relationships, and resilience and showed how these can help protect employees from the negative effects of occupational stressors.

Additionally, structured routines and work-life balance are important for employees' ability to handle and adapt to the stresses associated with working in high-demand jobs. In addition to the aforementioned factors, Robinson et al. (2024) identified other psychological resources that enable individuals to perform at their best while navigating adverse situations, such as optimism, cognitive flexibility, and adaptive coping strategies. Overall, the participants emphasized the importance of incorporating time management practices, social support networks, and positive thinking strategies when developing resilient practices to ensure that employees can achieve a higher quality of life and remain healthy in stressful and challenging work environments.

Moreover, Resilience Practices represent the interaction between Job Demands and resources described by the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. Effective time management, establishing clear boundaries between work and personal time, and building strong social connections are examples of personal and social resources that provide employees with the means to mitigate the negative impact of stress and promote their psychological well-being. These same behaviors are also reflective of the concepts of autonomy and relatedness in Self-Determination Theory, as employees develop and implement plans that allow them to maintain control over their work-life balance and develop meaningful social relationships. Finally, the concepts of social coherence and social integration from Social Well-Being Theory were reflected in the participants' descriptions of consistent communication with colleagues and the separation of their work and personal lives to create a sense of structure and community.

Table 4 provides a summary of call center agent insights and reflections about what they see as important in their work experiences, and some methods that may be used by agents to foster ongoing growth and well-being. Agents indicated the importance of healthcare plans for their overall well-being as both an economic safety net and an important means to assist them in caring for themselves physically and mentally. This

demonstrates the need for organizations to provide tools and resources that will allow agents to control job-related stress and create a supportive environment for them.

The importance of personal growth was also a major theme, illustrating how agents grew and developed valuable skills (communication, technology, emotional regulation, and time management) that increased their resilience and adaptability. In addition to providing a platform for professional development, many BPO positions are viewed as providing excellent opportunities for personal growth. Practical advice and guidance provided by current agents to future agents reflects a lot of "street-smart" wisdom based on their experience and encourages agents to plan their careers realistically, be aware of and accept the challenges that exist in the industry, and take proactive measures to enhance their skills, all of which can help create a long-term career trajectory and reduce the risk of burnout.

Resilience practices were a unifying theme among the ideas that the agents expressed regarding their health, growth, and career guidance. They discussed the use of disciplined time management, establishing boundaries, and maintaining consistent social connections as the most effective ways of coping with work-related stress. Through the use of these strategies, agents can maintain good mental health, strong social bonds, and create a balance between their work and family lives to sustain their well-being in a high-stress work environment.

In conclusion, these comments represent a broad framework that call center agents can share with other agents to raise their awareness of health maintenance, continuing personal development, informed career planning, and building resilience as necessary components for success in today's rapidly changing BPO industry.

Table 5 Challenges Versus Reflections/Findings

Sub-Theme	Challenges	Results / Findings
Relationship Disruptions	<p>Night-shift schedules make it difficult to maintain family and social relationships. Agents miss important gatherings and milestones.</p> <p>Work schedules do not align with friends' and family members' routines.</p> <p>Decreased communication with loved ones due to fatigue and long working hours.</p>	<p>Participants reported reduced social interaction, increased relational distance, and feelings of isolation.</p> <p>Conflicts arose with family or friends due to unavailability or schedule mismatches.</p> <p>Research-based interpretation confirms that irregular work shifts disrupt circadian rhythms, increase stress, and weaken social ties.</p> <p>Despite disconnection outside, agents tend to replace lost social bonds with workplace relationships, developing a "second family" at work.</p>
Work Strain	<p>Emotional exhaustion from handling irate customers and strict metrics.</p> <p>Physical fatigue from night shifts, long hours, and disrupted sleep patterns.</p> <p>Inability to take leave for important events.</p> <p>Repetitive tasks and language barriers increase cognitive load.</p>	<p>Participants experienced burnout, sleep deprivation, and emotional fatigue.</p> <p>Agents struggle with maintaining alertness and emotional regulation during difficult shifts.</p> <p>Work strain directly impacts well-being, confirming literature on emotional labor in call center work.</p> <p>These strains contribute to overall diminished social and personal wellbeing.</p>
Work–Life Balance	<p>Work dominates personal time, leaving little room for rest or leisure.</p> <p>Preparation for tasks extends work hours.</p> <p>Parenting becomes difficult due to misaligned schedules (e.g., child awake when parent is asleep).</p> <p>Difficulty setting boundaries between personal and work time.</p>	<p>Agents report a persistent imbalance, feeling that life "revolves around work."</p> <p>Leads to decreased socialization, limited family time, and heightened stress.</p> <p>Findings show that role conflict and "time squeeze" are common in Business Processing Outsourcing work.</p> <p>Some agents gradually develop adaptive strategies such as adjusting routines or accepting imperfections in balance.</p>
Lifestyle Adjustments	<p>Loss of normal routines (church, gym, hobbies).</p> <p>Constant schedule changes every 1–2 months disrupt personal planning.</p> <p>Sleep cycle shifts cause fatigue and decreased productivity.</p> <p>Frequent missed gatherings due to shift conflict.</p>	<p>Participants drastically adjusted their lifestyle to cope (e.g., sleep over social activities).</p> <p>Literature confirms that shift workers often alter sleep, diet, and social routines to sustain job performance.</p> <p>Lifestyle changes can lead to social isolation and perceived loss of normalcy.</p> <p>Some agents apply time management and proactive planning to cope.</p>
Social Support	<p>Emotional labor and demanding work increase the need for psychological support.</p> <p>Family and friends might not fully understand Business Processing Outsourcing difficulties due to schedule differences.</p> <p>Risk of loneliness caused by limited non-work social connections.</p>	<p>Strong workplace friendships act as a buffer against stress.</p> <p>Coworker and team support improves psychological resilience, reduces anxiety, and enhances well-being.</p> <p>Family support recharges emotional energy despite reduced time together.</p> <p>Dual support systems (workplace + home) improve coping capacity.</p>
Skill Development	<p>Continuous exposure to diverse customers and tasks requires patience and communication skills.</p> <p>Constant team changes require strong adaptability.</p> <p>High expectations from clients and supervisors push agents to improve quickly.</p>	<p>Agents develop enhanced communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills.</p> <p>Improved adaptability and emotional regulation.</p> <p>Increased self-confidence due to constant interaction with people of different cultures.</p> <p>Growth in English proficiency, teamwork, patience, and technical skills.</p>
Work Commitment	<p>Missing special family events due to shift demands.</p> <p>Facing stressful customers and performance pressure.</p> <p>Maintaining motivation despite emotional and physical strain.</p>	<p>Many remain committed due to financial stability, WFH convenience, and career opportunities.</p> <p>Positive client feedback increases sense of purpose.</p> <p>Commitment strengthened by supportive workplace culture and work benefits.</p> <p>Business Processing Outsourcing work is perceived as a stable income source that enables family support.</p>
Health and Self-Care	<p>Irregular sleep patterns affect physical and mental health.</p> <p>Emotional strain leads to fatigue and stress.</p>	<p>Health benefits provided by companies help sustain employees' well-being.</p>

	Difficulty sustaining healthy habits due to lack of time or energy.	Participants recognize the need for rest, self-care, and mental health awareness. Self-care becomes a deliberate strategy for maintaining resilience. Acknowledgment that ignoring health leads to burnout and emotional decline.
Personal Growth	High-pressure interactions require emotional maturity. Handling complaints forces personal patience and self-regulation. Navigating stress and workload changes requires mental discipline.	Participants report becoming stronger, more patient, and more adaptable. Improved emotional regulation (e.g., controlling impatience, avoiding grudges). Development of self-confidence, maturity, and better decision-making. Growth leads to increased social well-being and career readiness.
Resilience Practices	Continuous exposure to stress and shifting demands. Difficulty maintaining relationships due to lack of time. Risk of emotional exhaustion if boundaries are unclear.	Agents cultivate resilience through time management, boundary-setting, and maintaining small but consistent communication with loved ones. Emotional distancing from work helps preserve mental health. Positive outlook and gratitude enable better coping and long-term adjustment. Resilience becomes a learned behavior shaped by work demands.

In table 5, the findings highlight the multidimensional challenges faced by call center agents, particularly in balancing work demands with personal and social well-being. Relationship disruptions were prominent, with participants reporting missed family milestones, reduced communication, and feelings of isolation due to night shifts and irregular schedules. These experiences align with Wöhrmann et al. (2020) and Dale (2021), who note that shift work disrupts circadian rhythms and weakens social ties, often leading to social withdrawal. Work strain was also evident, as agents described emotional exhaustion from handling irate customers and strict performance metrics along with physical fatigue from disrupted sleep. This aligns with Abutar et al. (2025), who highlighted the role of emotional labor in burnout and diminished psychological well-being. Participants further reported persistent challenges in maintaining work–life balance, as personal time was often consumed by job demands, a finding supported by Dale (2021) and Wöhrmann et al. (2020), who emphasized that irregular schedules and lifestyle adjustments (sleep, diet, and social activities) exacerbate stress and disconnection.

Despite these challenges, social support has emerged as a key coping mechanism. Workplace friendships and family connections help buffer stress and enhance resilience, consistent with Garmendia et al. (2023). Participants also acknowledged their personal growth, noting improvements in communication, adaptability, and emotional regulation, reinforcing Hilario’s (2021) assertion that resilience can develop through exposure to demanding work environments.

Collectively, these insights underscore the dual nature of call center work: it imposes significant emotional and social burdens while simultaneously fostering coping strategies, resilience, and professional growth, which help agents navigate complex work demands.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the lived experiences of call center agents are shaped by the complex interplay between strain, adaptation, and growth. On the one hand, the nature of Business Processing Outsourcing work, particularly its demanding schedules, night shifts, and emotional tolls. This has created several significant challenges. Agents experience relationship disruptions, lifestyle sacrifices, burnout, and persistent struggles with their work-life balance. These realities underscore how industry strains not only individual workers, but also their families and social networks.

However, the data highlight the agents’ remarkable capacity for resilience and personal development. In the workplace, a strong sense of belonging emerges as colleagues become a substitute family, offering emotional and social support that helps mitigate stress. Simultaneously, agent reports gain valuable skills such as improved communication, adaptability, time management, and patience. These competencies not only enhance work performance, but also contribute to broader social well-being.

Over time, agents demonstrate the ability to transform hardships into reflections and growth. They recognize the importance of self-care, leverage workplace and family support, and develop strategies to sustain balance despite the inherent difficulties in their role. Importantly, their insights into future agents reveal a pragmatic understanding of the Business Processing Outsourcing industry. While it offers opportunities for financial stability and personal growth, it should be viewed as a stepping stone rather than a permanent career path.

In conclusion, the experiences of call center agents are defined by both burdens and benefits. Although the work

environment often disrupts personal life and health, it also cultivates resilience, fosters meaningful workplace relationships, and equips agents with transferable life skills. This duality suggests that interventions aimed at promoting work–life balance, health support systems, and career development pathways are essential for enhancing the social well-being of call center workers. Ultimately, their stories reflect the challenges of contemporary labor in the Business Processing Outsourcing sector and the enduring human capacity to adapt, grow, and find meaning amid adversity.

V. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARK

➤ *Implications for Practice in Business Processing Outsourcing*

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the lived experiences of call center agents and present several practical implications, particularly for organizations, team leaders, HR practitioners, wellness advocates, and social workers supporting Business Processing Outsourcing employees.

First, workplace wellness programmes must be holistic and intentional. The data shows that many agents experience social isolation, emotional fatigue, and physical exhaustion. While some companies offer basic wellness initiatives, they often miss the deeper needs of their employees. Programs should not only focus on physical health but also address social well-being, mental health, and emotional resilience. This could include peer support groups, guided mindfulness sessions, counseling access, and structured avenues for social connection, even within virtual work setup.

Second, flexibility in scheduling and break management can significantly affect an agent’s capacity to maintain relationships and to recover from stress. Based on participants’ narratives, rest days and off-hours were often consumed by fatigue, leaving little time or energy for socialization. Allowing for flexible shift swapping, extended rest periods after consecutive night shifts, or “recovery leaves” could support a better work-life balance and help agents preserve their personal relationships.

Third, team culture plays a crucial role in protecting social well-being. The study revealed that, for many agents, coworkers, and team leads serve as emotional anchors. Fostering a team environment that encourages open communication, empathy, and psychological safety can help agents cope with job pressure. Leaders can be trained to recognize signs of burnout and initiate check-ins beyond task performance.

Fourth, remote work arrangements require strong relational structures. Although remote setups offer convenience, they often lead to deeper feelings of disconnection. Companies should provide intentional spaces for social engagement, even in online environments such as virtual team-building activities, casual check-ins, or “non-work” group chats that replicate the hallway conversations missing in remote settings.

Finally, support for personal-time management is vital. Agents themselves recognize the importance of time management but struggle to apply it due to fatigue and schedule rigidity. Practical workshops or coaching sessions on managing time, setting boundaries, and protecting personal energy can empower agents to create spaces for social life outside of work. These can be integrated into onboard or regular training.

➤ *Implications for the Social Work Field Practice*

First, it highlights the importance of occupational social work within the Business Processing Outsourcing sector. Given the prevalence of burnout, relationship disruptions, and emotional strain, Business Processing Outsourcing companies can benefit from hiring in-house social workers to provide counseling, crisis intervention, and stress management programs. Social workers embedded in the workplace can design and implement Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) tailored to the unique demands of night-shift and performance-driven environments. This integration would not only enhance employee well-being but also contribute to organizational productivity and retention.

Second, the findings emphasize the role of social workers in the family and community support systems. Agents reported difficulties in maintaining family ties due to irregular schedules, suggesting the need for interventions that extend beyond the workplace. Social workers can facilitate family counseling, community workshops, and peer support groups that help employees and their families adapt to the challenges of shift work. Such initiatives align with the holistic approach to social work to strengthen family resilience and community cohesion.

Third, the study underscores the necessity of mental health advocacy in the business processing-outsourcing industry. Emotional fatigue and burnout were recurring themes, indicating the need for preventive intervention. Social workers can normalize mental health care in organizational settings, reduce stigma, and promote proactive wellness practices, such as resilience training, mindfulness, and peer support networks. This advocacy extends to policy development, where social workers can advise management on employee-centered policies, including flexible scheduling, bereavement leave, and wellness programs.

Fourth, the findings highlight the importance of individualized strength-based interventions at the micro level. Call center agents experience social strain in highly personal and subjective ways, shaped by factors such as coping style, personality, life stage, and existing support networks. Social workers can conduct comprehensive psychosocial assessments to identify their unique stressors, social disconnections, and adaptive capacities. Through one-on-one casework, social workers can help agents develop personalized coping strategies, improve communication skills, set healthy boundaries between work and personal life, and rebuild strained relationships. This micro-level practice reinforces the person-in-environment perspective of social work by addressing how individual experiences of social well-being are influenced by both workplace demands and personal

circumstances, ultimately empowering agents to regain a sense of control, meaning, and balance in their daily lives.

Finally, this study points to the potential of social workers to facilitate collective action and resilience practices within Business Processing Outsourcing organizations. Workplace belonging has emerged as a protective factor, and social workers can strengthen this through peer support networks, structured resilience programs, and community-organizing initiatives. These efforts reinforce the commitment of social work to empowerment, solidarity, and social justice in occupational contexts.

In summary, the findings suggest that the Business Processing Outsourcing industry is a critical site for social work interventions. By hiring social workers, Business Processing Outsourcing companies can address the psychosocial needs of employees, strengthen family and community support systems, advocate humane labor policies, and promote resilience and empowerment. This integration positions social work not only as a support mechanism but also as a strategic partner in fostering sustainable well-being and organizational effectiveness.

➤ *Implications for Future Research*

This study opens several meaningful directions for future research on the social well-being of call center agents and similar workforce populations. While the findings captured the lived experiences of a specific group of participants, future studies may further explore these themes in broader, deeper, and more diverse contexts.

First, quantitative studies could help measure the extent of social disconnection and burnout among call center agents. While this research provided rich qualitative insights, a larger-scale survey could quantify how widespread these experiences are and identify patterns across demographics, such as age, tenure, work setup (remote vs. on-site), or shift type.

Second, there is an opportunity to compare experiences across different regions and company types. This study was based on a specific group of agents; however, social well-being may differ across multinational business processing outsourcing, local firms, and outsourced agencies. Future research could investigate how organizational culture, compensation, and management styles influence social outcomes.

Third, future studies may explore the role of gender, caregiving roles, and marital status in how agents experience work-life balance and social well-being. Several participants in this study mentioned caretaking pressures, particularly those with children; however, this area remains underexplored and deserves a focused lens.

Fourth, longitudinal research could offer a more complete picture of changes over time. Social well-being is not static; it may evolve as agents stay longer in the industry or transition into different life stages. Participants across months or years may reveal how coping mechanisms, resilience, or social support shift over time.

Fifth, intervention-based research is recommended. Future researchers could test programs or models designed to improve the social well-being of call center workers. For instance, studies could evaluate the impact of wellness activities, time management workshops, virtual social engagement initiatives, and counseling services tailored to business process-outsourcing employees.

Finally, future research can consider using mixed-method designs that integrate both narrative depth and statistical generalizability. This would provide a more well-rounded understanding of the issue and support more evidence-based solutions for practitioners, companies, and policymakers.

Overall, the complexity of call center work and its impact on the human side of the agent warrant continued academic attention. Building on this study, future researchers can contribute to more meaningful, compassionate, and informed practices in the Business Processing Outsourcing industry and beyond.

➤ *Concluding Remark*

This study is a truly eye-opening and deeply personal experience. As someone who also works in the BPO industry, I thought I already understood what call center agents go through. However, hearing the participants' stories made me realize just how much I overlooked. Listening to them talk about emotional strain, strained relationships, and the constant pressure to stay composed opened my eyes to the human side of this work, something that statistics or my own experiences could never fully capture. It was both validating and humbling to recognize that the challenges I face daily, long hours, night shifts, and emotional exhaustion, are shared by many, yet each person navigates them in their own way.

One of the most striking lessons learned is the resilience woven into the lives of call center agents. Despite stress, many participants actively sought ways to stay connected, care for themselves, and grow personally. Their creativity and strength made me reflect on my own coping strategies and rethink how I approach work-life balance and nurture relationships outside of work.

This study also made me aware of how social well-being can be easily taken for granted in the BPO industry. Like many, I have sometimes accepted isolation and stress as "just part of the job," without realizing the long-term impact on my health and relationships. Recognizing this has inspired me to be more intentional about self-care, to seek support when needed, and to advocate for healthier work practices—not only for myself but also for my colleagues.

Ultimately, this research is not just an academic project. It has been a mirror reflecting on my own experiences and a window into the lives of others who share this journey. This reinforces the importance of listening, empathy, and human connection in workplaces that often prioritize efficiency over people. I finish this study with a renewed sense of purpose: to value social well-being, foster stronger connections, and help

create a workplace culture that supports not just output but the people behind it.

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