International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

A STUDY ON "INCREASING EFFICIENCY IN SEPARATION PROCESS" WITH REFERENCE TO TVS MOTOR, HOSUR

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ABSTRACT

This project focuses on transforming the manual employee separation checklist process at TVS Company into a streamlined digital system. The existing manual process was found to be timeconsuming, prone to delays, and lacked transparency, resulting in an average turnaround time (TAT) of six days. Key issues included delayed asset return from field employees, poor communication of separation policies, and a negative impact on the onboarding experience for new hires. By introducing a digital checklist system, the process became more efficient, reducing the TAT to three days and enabling real-time tracking, automated notifications, and better documentation. The project findings highlight that digitalization not only improves accuracy and speed but also enhances the overall experience for both departing and incoming employees. Recommendations include further integration with HR systems, employee policy awareness programs, and regular feedback-based optimization. This initiative aligns with TVS Company's broader goal of embracing digital transformation for operational excellence and employee satisfaction.

Keywords: Competency Mapping, Skill Alignment, Employee Development, HR Integration, Performance Management, Training, Digital Tools.

INTRODUCTION

Human Resources (HR) Operations is a pivotal function within organizations, encompassing the management of day-to-day administrative and operational tasks related to human resources. It covers several key components: Employee Lifecycle Management, which spans recruitment, onboarding, performance management, training, and offboarding; Payroll and Benefits Administration, ensuring accurate and timely compensation along with managing benefits like health insurance and retirement plans; Compliance and Legal Issues, ensuring adherence to labor laws and tax regulations; HR Information Systems (HRIS), which manage and maintain HR software systems storing employee data; Employee Relations, handling grievances and fostering a positive work environment; and Workforce Planning, analyzing and planning for future workforce needs to align with the organization's strategic goals.The separation process in HR operations is a critical phase, involving several steps to ensure a smooth transition for both departing employees and the organization. Initially, pre-departure preparation involves confirming resignation details, creating a personalized separation plan, and informing relevant departments such as IT, payroll, security, and facilities. Communication and announcements follow, with internal communication informing the team and stakeholders about the employee's departure and reallocating responsibilities, and external communication notifying clients or external partners if necessary. Knowledge transfer is facilitated through documentation and training sessions for successors or team members taking over the departing employee's duties. An exit interview is conducted to gather feedback, which is documented and shared with relevant stakeholders for analysis and action. Final pay and benefits are calculated, ensuring the departing employee receives their final paycheck, including any accrued leave, bonuses, or other entitlements, and managing the termination of benefits. Asset and access management involves retrieving company property and revoking access to company systems and digital resources. Celebrating contributions acknowledges the departing employee's contributions to the organization, maintaining positive relations and encouraging them to stay in touch. Post-departure follow-up includes monitoring the transition process to ensure responsibilities are smoothly handed over and using feedback from exit interviews to identify areas for improvement in HR practices and policies.

Efficient separation processes are vital for several reasons: ensuring compliance with labor laws and regulations, reducing the risk of legal issues; providing a positive employee experience, leaving a good impression on departing employees; enhancing operational efficiency by reducing administrative burdens; ensuring data security by promptly revoking access to company systems and data; and gathering feedback for continuous improvement in HR practices and overall organizational performance. By focusing on these aspects, organizations can enhance their HR operations and ensure that the separation process is handled efficiently and effectively, supporting the overall health and productivity of the organization.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Employee turnover is a significant concern for organizations, with studies indicating that the costs associated with replacing an employee can range from 30% to 200% of their annual salary, encompassing recruitment, training, and lost productivity. High turnover often signals dissatisfaction, poor management practices, or inadequate onboarding processes. In the context of TVS Motor Company, the manual employee separation process exacerbates these challenges by introducing inefficiencies and delays. The reliance on paper-based checklists hampers coordination among departments such as HR, IT, and administration, leading to prolonged exit formalities and a negative experience for departing employees. In Indian organizations, especially in the manufacturing sector, the adoption of competency-based practices is gradually increasing.

Furthermore, when field employees resign, the manual process of asset return to the area office manager on their last day causes delays in transferring assets to the plant office. This delay results in new employees not receiving their assets promptly, adversely affecting their onboarding experience. Research has shown that effective onboarding, which includes timely provision of necessary tools and resources, is crucial for new employees to feel welcomed and integrated into the company, thereby reducing turnover intentions.

Additionally, a lack of awareness regarding separation policies among employees leads to confusion and delays in the separation process. Inconsistent handling of offboarding can expose businesses to risks such as data breaches, legal issues, and damage to the employer brand. Implementing a streamlined, digital separation process can mitigate these risks by ensuring compliance, enhancing communication, and improving the overall employee experience during the transition period.

IDENTIFIED PROBLEM

At TVS Motor Company, approximately 30 employees depart each month, leading to several operational challenges. The manual separation checklist currently in use is time-consuming and prone to errors, necessitating a transition to a digital format to enhance efficiency and accuracy. Additionally, when field employees resign, they are required to return company assets to the area office manager on their last day. This delay in asset transfer to the plant office results in new employees not receiving their assets promptly, adversely affecting their onboarding experience. Furthermore, a lack of awareness regarding separation policies among employees causes confusion and delays in the separation process. To address these issues, there is a pressing need for improved communication, training, and the implementation of streamlined, digital processes to ensure a smoother and more efficient separation experience for all employees.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary goal is to transition from a manual to a digital separation checklist. This transformation seeks to streamline the separation process by automating tasks, reducing human errors, and ensuring that all necessary steps and documentation are completed accurately and promptly. Implementing a user-friendly digital platform will facilitate seamless access and tracking, thereby improving overall efficiency.

Optimizing the asset transfer process is crucial, especially for departing field employees. The objective is to ensure the timely submission of assets to the plant office, preventing delays in the allocation of equipment to new employees. By establishing a centralized asset management system that tracks transfers in real-time, the organization can ensure a smooth transition and maintain operational continuity. Increasing awareness and understanding of separation policies among employees is essential to reduce confusion and delays during the separation process. The study aims to achieve this by providing regular training sessions and accessible resources, such as guides and FAQs. These initiatives will educate employees on the separation policies, leading to a more efficient and smooth transition for both the departing employees and the organization.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Armstrong (2014), employee separation is a natural part of the employment lifecycle, and managing it effectively is crucial for maintaining workplace morale and minimizing legal or reputational risks. Scholars such as **Dessler (2017)** classify separation into voluntary and involuntary forms, with each having distinct implications for HR policies and organizational strategy. Voluntary separation may be driven by personal factors (Mobley et al., 1979) such as job dissatisfaction, better opportunities, or life changes. Involuntary separation, as noted by Cascio (2016), includes layoffs and terminations initiated by the employer, often due to organizational restructuring, poor performance, or misconduct.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) and its application in HR literature suggest that poor hygiene factors—like working conditions or salary—can lead to dissatisfaction and voluntary separation. Price and Mueller (1981) emphasize organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived alternatives as key determinants of turnover. Organizational factors like leadership style, work culture, and career growth opportunities also influence separation rates (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000). The economic climate can further accelerate involuntary separations, particularly during recessions or global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020).

Employee separation has both direct and indirect costs. **According to Mathis and Jackson (2011)**, costs include severance pay, recruitment, training, and lost productivity. High turnover rates may also harm organizational knowledge retention, client relationships, and overall morale (Glebbeek & Bax, 2004). However, some literature views separation as beneficial when it allows for organizational renewal or performance-based realignment (Trevor, Gerhart & Boudreau, 1997). Effective management of 12 separation processes, including exit interviews and knowledge transfer mechanisms, can mitigate negative impacts (Allen, 2008).

Proper handling of employee separation requires adherence to labor laws and ethical standards. Mishandled terminations can lead to legal disputes and damage to employer branding (Stone, 2013). The literature highlights the importance of due process, fair treatment, and clear communication in separation policies (Noe et al., 2019).

Research advocates transparent and consistent separation procedures. Structured exit interviews can provide insights into systemic issues (Morrell, Loan-

Clarke & Wilkinson, 2001). Transition support, including outplacement services, helps maintain goodwill and reduces stress (Schlossberg, 1981). In high-performance organizations, separation is integrated with talent management, ensuring that departures are strategically managed and do not compromise workforce capability (Ulrich et al., 2012).

RESEARCH GAP

Despite a considerable body of literature examining various aspects of employee separation, several key gaps remain that limit our understanding of the subject in the modern HRM context. These gaps highlight the need for more nuanced, inclusive, and up-to-date research.

1. Lack of Focus on Employee Experience During Separation Much of the existing research concentrates on organizational outcomes such as cost reduction, turnover rates, and legal compliance. However, the emotional and psychological impact of separation on employees—especially in cases of involuntary exits like layoffs or dismissals—is often overlooked. Understanding the employee's perspective can offer valuable insights into how separation affects morale, future employability, and mental well-being.

2. Sector-Specific Differences are Underexplored Most studies are generalized or focused on large corporate environments, neglecting industry specific nuances. For example, employee separation in sectors like healthcare, education, or startups involves different challenges and consequences compared to manufacturing or IT industries. Customized research is needed to understand how separation practices and outcomes differ across various sectors.

3. Insufficient Research on Post-Separation Outcomes There is a lack of longitudinal studies tracking what happens to employees after they leave an organization. What different types of separation—such as voluntary resignation, retirement, or termination—affect an individual's long-term career growth, financial stability, and professional identity remains an underexplored area in HRM literature.

4. Emerging Challenges in Virtual or Remote Separations With the rise of remote work and virtual HR processes, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, new challenges have emerged in managing employee exits. However, the literature has not yet caught up with this shift. Questions around digital communication, emotional disconnect, and the effectiveness of virtual offboarding remain largely unanswered.

5. Limited Consideration of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) The role of demographic factors such as gender, race, age, or disability in separation decisions is not thoroughly studied. There is a need for research to explore how unconscious biases might influence separation practices and whether certain groups face higher risks of unfair or disproportionate existence.

6. Need for Ethical and Compassionate Separation Frameworks Although legal compliance is often discussed in separation-related literature, ethical considerations and humane treatment are less emphasized. Few studies offer comprehensive frameworks for conducting separations in a way that maintains dignity, psychological safety, and trust especially during mass layoffs or organizational restructuring.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research:

Objective: To explore the experiences and perceptions of HR professionals and employees regarding the current separation process.

Method: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with HR managers, area office managers, and departing employees. This method allows for in-depth exploration of individual experiences and insights.

Sampling: Purposive sampling will be employed to select participants who are directly involved in or affected by the separation process. This includes HR personnel, managers overseeing asset returns, and employees who have recently undergone the separation process.

Data Analysis: Thematic analysis will be utilized to identify recurring themes and patterns in the interview data, providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges and areas for improvement.

Quantitative Research:

Objective: To quantify the impact of the current separation process on operational efficiency and employee experience.

Method: A structured survey will be distributed to a broader sample of employees who have recently left the organization. The survey will assess various aspects of the separation process, including turnaround time, clarity of policies, and asset return procedures.

Sampling: Stratified random sampling will be used to ensure diverse representation across different departments and roles.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data, and inferential statistics (such as chi-square tests) will be applied to identify significant relationships between variables.

Integration Phase:

Objective: To synthesize qualitative and quantitative findings to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues and propose actionable solutions.

Method: Triangulation will be employed to cross-verify findings from both phases, enhancing the validity and reliability of the results.

Outcome: The integrated findings will inform the development of a digital separation checklist and streamlined asset return process, aiming to reduce turnaround time, enhance employee experience, and minimize manual workload.

This mixed-methods approach ensures a robust analysis of the identified problem, facilitating evidence-based recommendations for process improvement.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study may be based on feedback and data from a specific set of departments or locations, which may not fully represent the experiences of all employees across the organization.

• The duration allocated for the study may restrict the depth of analysis, especially for collecting and analyzing long-term trends or conducting follow-ups with separate
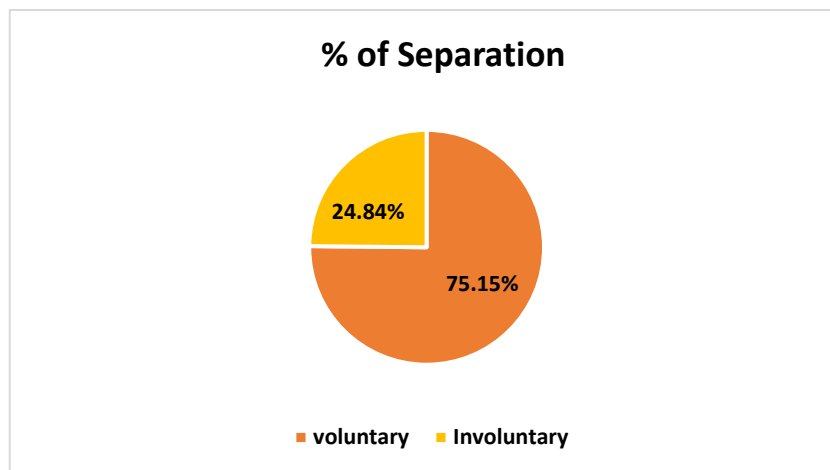
employees.

• Responses from employees may be influenced by personal experiences, emotions, or recent interactions, which could introduce bias and affect the objectivity of the findings.

• Organizational policies and procedures may evolve during or after the study period, limiting the relevance or applicability of certain recommendations over time.

• Recommendations for digitization or system changes may be limited by existing IT infrastructure, budget constraints, or integration challenges with current platforms.

• The study primarily focuses on improving efficiency, communication, and employee experience. Legal or compliance-related aspects of separation may not be covered in depth.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1. What is number of separations in TVS?

category	No. of Separation	% of Separation
voluntary	121	75.15%
Involuntary	40	24.84%
total	161	100%

% of Separation

24.84% 75.15%

■ voluntary ■ Involuntary

Inference

The separation data indicates that out of 161 total employee separations, 121 (75.15%) were voluntary, while 40 (24.84%) were involuntary. This high proportion of voluntary exits suggests that a significant number of employees are choosing to leave the organization on their own, which may point to potential issues such as dissatisfaction with the work environment, limited career growth, or better external opportunities. The relatively lower rate of involuntary separations indicates stability in terms of performance or disciplinary concerns. To address this, the organization should consider conducting detailed exit interviews and implementing targeted retention strategies to reduce voluntary turnover and improve employee engagement.

**Table 2. Which age group shows the highest attrition rate?**

Age wise	No. of separation	% of separation
25-30	65	40.37%
30-40	25	15.53%
40-45	30	18.63%
45 and above	41	25.47%
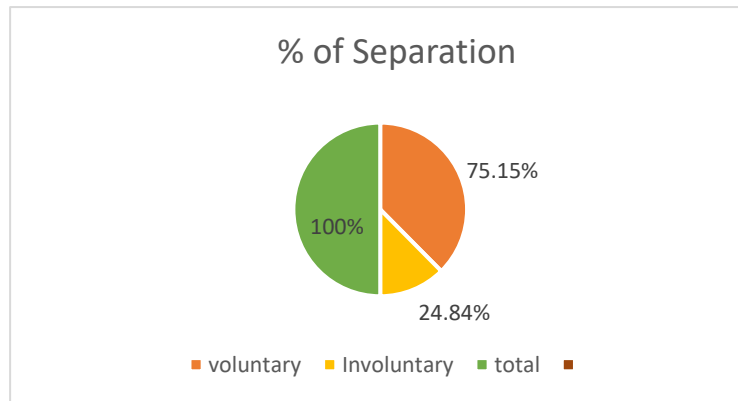
Inference:

The data reveals that the highest separation rate occurs in the 25-30 age group, accounting for 40.37% of total separations, likely due to younger employees seeking career growth or better opportunities. The 40-45 age group shows moderate turnover at 18.63%, possibly due to career transitions or burnout, while the 45 and above group makes up 25.47% of separations, which could be attributed to retirement or phase-of-life changes. The 30-40 age group has the lowest turnover, with just 15.53%, suggesting greater job stability and career satisfaction at this stage. Overall, younger employees experience the most separation, while those in mid-career to later stages tend to have more stable careers or are transitioning to different life phases.

Do you feel the Separation team works effectively with other departments within the organization?

Responses	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Always	16	84%
Often	3	16%
Sometimes	0	0%
Rarely	0	0%
Total	19	100%
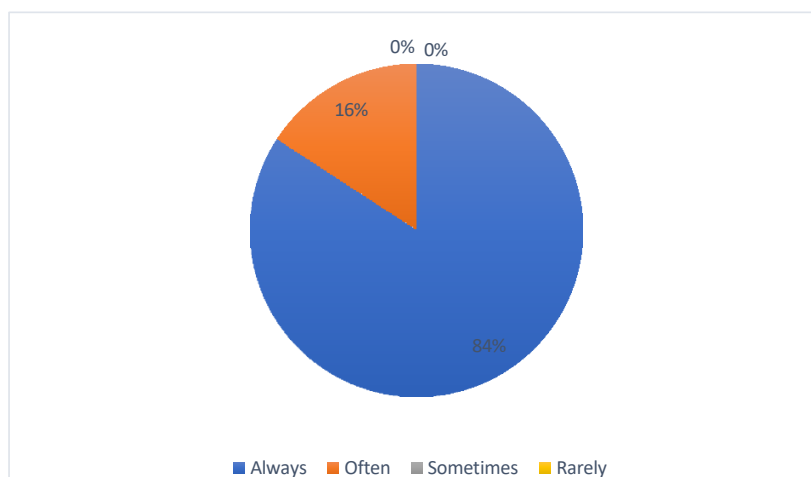
Inference

The vast majority, 84% of respondents, feel the separation team always works effectively with other departments, while 16% feel they often do. No respondents selected "sometimes" or "rarely".

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This project identified key inefficiencies in the current manual employee separation process and highlighted the potential benefits of digitalization. The main findings are as follows:

Manual Process is Time-Consuming and Error-Prone: The current separation checklist, being paper-based, requires multiple physical approvals and manual follow-ups. This contributes to an average turnaround time (TAT) of 6 days, as shown in the analysis.

Digitalization Significantly Reduces Turnaround Time: The introduction of a digital checklist reduced the average TAT to 3 days, reflecting a 50% improvement in process efficiency. This change streamlines approvals, reduces follow-ups, and enhances visibility for all stakeholders.

Delays in Asset Return Disrupt Onboarding: Field employees often return company assets to area office managers, but delays in transferring these assets to the plant office cause a lag in asset availability for new hires. This negatively impacts onboarding experience and productivity of incoming employees.

Lack of Awareness of Separation Policies Causes Delays: Many employees are not well-informed about the separation procedures and requirements, leading to incomplete submissions and clearance delays. This underscores the need for improved communication and training regarding company offboarding policies.

Stakeholders Support the Move to Digital: Responses from questionnaires and observations indicate that HR personnel, managers, and employees see value in adopting a digital solution with features like automated notifications, real-time tracking, and policy guidance.

SUGGESTIONS

Implement a Digital Separation Platform: Deploy a centralized digital system for managing the employee separation process with automated workflows, approval tracking, and digital documentation.

Introducing Real-Time Tracking and Notifications: Enable real-time progress tracking and automated email or app notifications to reduce follow-up delays and improve process transparency.

Standardize the Asset Return Procedure: Create a standardized protocol ensuring field assets are directly returned to the plant office or tracked digitally to prevent delays in reallocation.

Conduct Employee Awareness Sessions: Organize short training sessions or onboarding materials to educate employees on separation policies, reducing errors and confusion.

•Monitor and Evaluate Continuously: Regularly review TAT and feedback from users to identify bottlenecks and continuously improve the digital separation workflow.

CONCLUSION

The employee separation process is a critical part of the HR lifecycle, and its efficiency directly impacts both departing and incoming employees. This project at TVS Company aimed to identify inefficiencies in the existing manual separation system and propose a digital alternative that enhances operational performance. The findings clearly demonstrate that the manual process was time-consuming, prone to delays, and lacked visibility. The average turnaround time (TAT) in the manual system was 6 days, often prolonged due to manual approvals and unclear communication. Additionally, the delayed asset returns from field employees disrupted onboard schedules for new hires, negatively affecting the employee experience. The introduction of a digital separation checklist significantly improved process efficiency, reducing the average TAT to 3 days. It enabled real-time tracking, automated notifications, and centralized documentation, all of which contributed to a faster, smoother, and more transparent offboarding experience. Moreover, the project highlighted the need for greater awareness and communication regarding separation policies, which can be addressed through training and better documentation. By digitizing the separation process, TVS not only improves internal efficiency but also aligns with its broader goal of embracing digital transformation for sustainable growth. In summary, the project confirms that moving from a manual to a digital separation system is a strategic step forward for TVS, offering long-term benefits in terms of time savings, improved compliance, and enhanced employee satisfaction.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While this project has successfully demonstrated the benefits of digitalizing the employee separation process at TVS, several opportunities exist for further research and development:

Integration with Other HR Systems: Future studies can explore how the digital separation process can be integrated with payroll, attendance, and asset management systems for a fully automated HR workflow.

Employee Feedback and Experience Analysis: Research can be conducted to gather detailed feedback from employees who have undergone both manual and digital separation, to assess satisfaction levels and identify areas of improvement.

AI and Predictive Analytics in Separation Trends: Implementing AI tools to predict employee exit patterns and recommend retention strategies based on historical separation data could be a valuable area for exploration.

Mobile Accessibility and Field Deployment: Investigating the effectiveness of mobile-based separation tools for field employees, especially those in remote or on-site roles, could improve the reach and responsiveness of the process.

Comparative Study Across Departments or Locations: A broader comparative study between different plants or business units within TVS could help in standardizing best practices company wide.

Measuring Post-Separation Impacts: Research could also focus on how streamlined offboarding affects post-exit factors like alumni engagement, rehire rates, and brand reputation.

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