

Reasons Behind Back Sourcing Decision in Facilities Management Services: Expert Survey of Sri Lankan Cases

Alexander Rukshan¹ and Thatshayini Premanathan²

¹University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka
a.rukshan@vau.ac.lk ✉

²University of Moratuwa
pthatsha@gmail.com

Abstract

Global interest in back sourcing has risen due to outsourcing failures, yet research on back sourcing in the facilities management services is limited. This study aims to identify back sourcing reasons in facilities management services in Sri Lanka. Four industries including food, apparel, private hospital, and hotel were chosen to conduct an expert survey interview from middle managers who have been involved in the back sourcing process of the facility management services. Data were analysed through content analysis. Findings revealed that dissatisfaction with service quality often initiates back sourcing; high costs and poor service quality were common reasons. Additionally, organizational changes, such as management shifts and strategic adjustments, along with changes in vendor structure and strategies due to external factors, influenced the decision to bring outsourced functions back in-house. This study explores the nuanced dynamics of back sourcing decisions in the facilities management services in Sri Lanka.

Key words: *Outsourcing, Back sourcing, Facilities Management Services*

Introduction

Facilities Management has the complete responsibility for facilitating the core business of an industry (Amos & Gadzekpo, 2016). Facilities Management protects an industry's capital investment by putting the non-core business at the service of the core business and assists in converting a cost item into one that adds value (Atkin and Brooks, 2009). It would be challenging for industries to function and meet their goals without support facilities management services like cleaning, catering, transportation, information technology, health and safety, and maintenance. Coordinated administration of facility management services offers the possibility of cost savings, greater time for concentrate on core business, and improved

quality of activities (Kamodyová et al., 2020). Since facility management connects people, procedures, buildings, and technology (Opoku

& Lee 2022), facility management services are essential to the smooth operation of any business.

For the smooth operation of the facility management services, industries often relay on sourcing strategies. Four sourcing strategies including in-sourcing, out-tasking, outsourcing for cost saving, and outsourcing for capability are identified in the delivery of maintenance service in facilities management (Hui & Tsang (2004). Since each of these strategies has merits under specific circumstances, facility management services are carefully handled for internally delivered by a facilities management department and/ or offered by an external partner, for example outsourced (Arampatzi & Burger, 2020).

In recent years, industries have widely employed outsourcing as a strategic approach to surmount challenges and enhance competitive positioning (Arampatzi & Burger, 2020; Opoku & Lee, 2022). By outsourcing non-core services, industries can focus more on core

business (Amos & Gadzekpo, 2016). This tactic has been favoured for its potential to reduce costs, mitigate risk, and concentrate on core competencies (Kamodyová et al., 2020). Prior studies from Arampatzi & Burger (2020) and Kamodyová et al. (2020) indicates that outsourcing has encountered constraints, prompting organizations to explore alternative avenues and reevaluate their procurement strategies. Consequently, an emerging trend gaining prominence is the adoption of back sourcing that is to take an outsourced function back in-house (Hoang & Hartner, 2014; Moradlou et al., 2022).

Back sourcing is a strategic business manoeuvre characterized by the reinternalization of assets, activities, and expertise pertaining to the operations of a company, which were formerly contracted out to external service providers (Okoh & Mbah, 2023; Hoang & Hartner, 2014). Back sourcing has garnered escalating attention as corporations opt to terminate outsourced operations due to shortcomings in the outsourcing process (Hoang & Hartner, 2014). The practice involves reclaiming services previously delegated to third-party entities and reintegrating them within the organization, marking a notable shift towards internalized management (Moradlou et al., 2022). This phenomenon, recognized as back sourcing, reflects a burgeoning trend within contemporary business landscapes (Kotlarsky & Bognar, 2012).

A proficient business leader should consistently assess sourcing options, evaluating them against alternative strategies, to ensure optimal decision-making and alignment with organizational objectives (Andersson & Eriksson, 2017). For a back sourcing decision to exist, the decision to outsource an activity

must have been made in a make-or-buy decision. A make-or-buy analysis is necessary, when a company examines whether to make the service/product in-house or buy it externally (Andersson & Eriksson, 2017). While back sourcing has received increasing attention, much of the existing research remains concentrated in domains such as IT and manufacturing in developed countries (Ejodame & Oshri, 2018; Kotlarsky & Bognar, 2012).

This study offers a novel perspective by focusing on back sourcing in facilities management services (FMS) in the context of a developing country facing economic crisis, namely Sri Lanka. Unlike previous studies that largely emphasize technological or cost dimensions, this research explores institutional, strategic, and vendor-related drivers of back sourcing in low-resource contexts. It also contributes a tri-dimensional analytical framework, drawing on organizational, contractual, and environmental factors. Hence, this research not only fills a regional research gap but also contributes to context-sensitive theory building in back sourcing decision-making.

Hence the aim of this study is to investigate the reasons to get back the outsourced facility management services into in-house. Various industries including food, apparel, (private) hospital, and hotel were chosen to get a unique insight by cross-comparing companies that operate in the industries in Sri Lanka. We address the following research question:

RQ: The research question of this paper is “what factors have gone into the decision to back source?”

Literature Review

Back sourcing

Back sourcing has garnered a lot of interest in many parts of the world over the past ten years and more scholarly publications have been produced, for example Barbieri et al. (2018), Stentoft et al. (2016), and Moradlou

et al. (2022), there are few studies that concentrate on facility management services

back sourcing. We carefully reviewed the literature to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework for our case studies. By doing this, it was able to define back sourcing, find a comprehensive framework suitable to establish a set of factors to characterize the reasons for back sourcing the previously outsourced activities back in-house. Table 1 presets diverse definitions of back sourcing from prior research.

Table 1: Definitions for back sourcing by different authors

Number	Definitions for Back sourcing	Author(s) & Year
1	Back-sourcing describes the process of transferring previously outsourced activities such as assets or personnel back in-house to resume ownership and operations.	Hirschheim & Lacity (1998)
2	Back-sourcing is the decision to cancel or not renew an existing outsourcing contract.	Akoka & Comyn-Attiau (2006); Dibbern et al. (2004)
3	Back-sourcing is the process of when a firm recalls back in-house the services that it previously outsourced to the mother company.	Allen, Allen, & Higgins (2006)
4	Back-sourcing refers to the action of bringing back an outsourced service or good back in-house.	Tadelis (2007)
5	Back-sourcing is taking an outsourced activity back in-house to be made by the company itself.	Veltri et al. (2008)
6	Back-sourcing is the opposite of the outsourcing strategy, meaning returning to the previously abandoned internal service provisioning strategy.	Wong & Jeya (2008)
7	Back-sourcing is the arduous process of termination or expiration of an outsourcing contract that initiates the process of re-establishing operations in-house.	Kaplan (2011)
8	Back-sourcing describes a process that can only follow an outsourcing or offshoring decision is made and implemented.	Kotlarsky & Bognar (2012)
9	Activities in back-sourcing have previously been outsourced, then brought back in house and performed by the company's own workforce.	Hong & Hartner (2014)
10	The change in ownership back to the mother organization is the distinctive characteristic of the term back-sourcing.	Nujen et al. (2015)
11	Back-sourcing is the re-internalization of a previously outsourced activity.	Thakur-Wernz & Bruyaka (2017)
12	Back-sourcing is the transition of those assets, activities, and skills required to perform services back in-house, which had been outsourced previously to one or multiple vendors.	Von-Bery, Westner, & Strahringer (2018)

Based on the synthesized definitions provided in Table 1, for the purpose of this research, back sourcing is defined as ‘the strategic process whereby a company opts to internally reclaim assets, activities, or expertise that were previously delegated to external service providers through outsourcing arrangements. This entails the cessation or non-renewal of existing outsourcing contracts and the subsequent reintroduction of these functions into the company's internal operations.

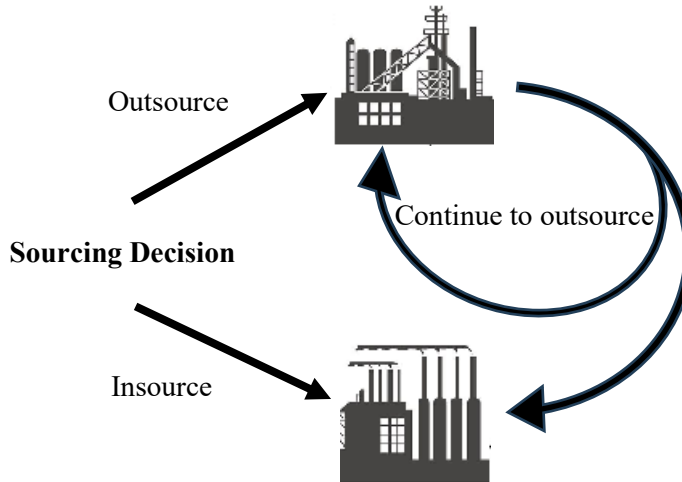
Reasons for back sourcing

Figure 1 depicts a broader range of sourcing decisions. The breakdown of the terms in the diagram are:

- Sourcing Decision: This is the initial stage of the process, where a company decides whether to produce a good or service internally (insource) or externally (outsource).
- Outsource: This means that the company will contract with another company to provide the good or service.
- Insource: This means that the company will produce the good or service itself.

- Continue to Outsource: This means that the company has decided to continue outsourcing the good or service.
- Back source: This means that the company has decided to switch from outsourcing a good or service to producing it in-house.

Figure 1: The sourcing process



The initial make-or-buy choice is the first sourcing decision. When the "buy" option was chosen and the business outsourced, the outsourcing relationship is routinely assessed by the client company. When the client firm comes to a re-evaluation stage, it must decide between outsourcing with its present provider, outsourcing with a different provider, or outsourcing internally.

In recent years, outsourcing has emerged as a prevalent practice for numerous companies, experiencing substantial growth (Moradlou et al., 2022). Outsourcing originated in the mid-60s with facility management and subsequently expanding into data centres and IT services with technological advancements (Hoang & Hartner, 2014). Despite the considerable attention paid to outsourcing, the phenomenon of back sourcing, involving the return of previously outsourced functions in-house, remains relatively underexplored, despite its growing significance for companies of all sizes (Whitten & Leidner, 2006). Heightened interest in back sourcing has arisen in response to heightened awareness of the genuine costs associated with global outsourcing and the importance of retaining manufacturing capabilities in-house or in proximity (Nujen, Halse, & Solli-Saether, 2015).

According to Bhagwatwar et al. (2011), the complexity of outsourcing strategies is likely to increase over time, with back sourcing

posing significant challenges in terms of knowledge retransfer, value chain integration, and skill reintegration. This underscores the importance for organizations to reconstruct requisite structures and retain or acquire employees with the appropriate knowledge base. Despite its significance, there remains a conspicuous gap in the literature concerning reasons for back sourcing. In instances where expectations are unmet, firms often find themselves compelled to reassess their decisions, potentially renegotiating contracts with vendors, transitioning to alternative vendors, or resorting to back sourcing (Andersson & Eriksson, 2017). Some scholars have suggested that back sourcing may emerge as a pivotal area within the outsourcing landscape in the forthcoming years (Dibbern et al., (2004). Indeed, for many companies, back sourcing has evolved into a strategic practice (Chou & Chou, 2011). It becomes therefore a very important issue to study within the context of business management. Having a background in this specific area, the decision to investigate further on back sourcing therefore was a natural choice.

As the concept of back sourcing gains traction, researchers have begun to explore the motives and rationales underlying the decision to revert to in-house provision of services (Veltri et al., 2008). Prior research classifies reasons for back sourcing into distinct categories. Table 2 shows the prior research that

consider various reasons behind the decision of back-sourcing. Veltri et al. (2008) provides a comprehensive framework delineating three major categories of back sourcing reasons: 1) problems with contract, 2) internally generated opportunities stemming from organizational changes, and 3) externally generated opportunities arising from external environmental changes.

These categorized reasons serve as the foundation for empirical investigation of this study, aimed at elucidating the reasons behind back sourcing within the facilities management services from the selected industries in Sri Lanka.

Table 2: Reasons behind the decision for back sourcing

Reasons	Reference														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Problems with Contract															
Higher than expected costs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Poor service quality	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Loss of control over outsourced services				√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Internally generated opportunities															
Changes in management				√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√	
Changes in company strategies				√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√	
Externally generated opportunities															
Changes in vendor's organisation and strategies				√	√	√	√	√			√	√			√

Where: 1 - Lacity & Willcock (2000); 2 - Falaleeva (2003); 3 - Whitten & Leidner (2006); 4 - Akoka & Comyn-Attiau (2006); 5 - McLaughlin & Peppard (2006); 6 - Wong & Jeya (2008); 7 - Martens & Teuteberg (2010); 8 - Beardsell (2010); 9 - Bhagwatwar, et al., (2011); 10 - Kotlarsky & Bogner (2012); 11 - Hong & Hartner (2014); 12 - Silva, et al., (2015); 13 - Amos & Gadzekpo (2016); 14 - Andersson & Eriksson (2017); 15 - Bary & Westner (2018).

Problems with contract

Prior research from Silva et al. (2015), Amos & Gadzekpo (2016), and Andersson & Eriksson (2017) found that three concerns including high than expected costs, poor service quality, and loss of control over outsourced services are important when considering problems with contract in the back sourcing reasons.

Higher than expected costs

Moradlou et al. (2022) found that cost considerations to be critical in back sourcing decisions. Outsourcing may be costlier than expected. While outsourcing firms may not have considered all costs, transaction costs in particular (Barthelemy, 2003). Whereas the costs involved with outsourcing initiatives tend to be substantially higher than planned because hidden costs tend to be overlooked and are hard to identify, as they grow over time (Raiborn, Butler, & Massoud, 2009).

The decision for back sourcing is often done when outsourcing arrangements do not

work as anticipated. This occurs usually because of the outsourcing decision was a mistake in the first place and it makes no sense to continue the relationship and waste more money (Tadelis, 2007). Cabral et al. (2014) explained that the incomplete nature of outsourcing contracts can be a capability to design and monitor contracts and which may increase cost and reduce outsourcing advantages (Cabral, Quelin, & Maia, 2014). Additionally, the focal company chooses not to continue the contract as it is not satisfied with the costs which are higher than expected.

Historically, economic considerations have been a major factor in make-or-buy decisions. Furthermore, in the buy decision, cost savings are often overestimated by the focal company (Veltri, Saunder, & Kavan, 2008). At the start of the outsourcing, the cost is probably as expected, but could change after a while to become more expensive than anticipated (Veltri, Saunder, & Kavan, 2008). Furthermore, cost aspects are found to be of higher relevance, specifically unrealized cost savings through agency costs, transaction costs,

Poor service quality

Kotlarsky and Bognar (2012) pointed that important factor associated with contractual problems are the gap between the received service levels and the expected service levels, which is referred to as poor service quality (Kotlarsky & Bognar, 2012). According to Veltri et al. (2008), poor service quality is typically perceived because of poor responsiveness, a lack of professionalism, and delays in service deliveries by the vendor. Low product and/ or service quality, poor communication, lower productivity, poor commitment of the vendor, and a lack of transparency are also the reasons for unsatisfying service quality (Leyh, Schaffer, &

Loss of control over outsourced services

Studying the loss of control of certain functions is a key in creating strategic value. According to Veltri et al. (2008), loss of control over outsourced services is a major factor in the reasons behind the decision for back sourcing. It is important to early identify the loss of control over outsourced services that were crucial in creating strategic value. This often involves functions that were outsourced and later identified as a key factor for gaining or maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage (Veltri, Saunder, & Kavan, 2008). For instance, if the manager feels that the focal company lack control over an outsourced

Internally generated opportunities from organizational changes

Silva et al. (2015) and Andersson & Eriksson (2017) found that changes in management and

Changes in management

hiring and retaining costs, lost performance, and uncertainty costs (Leyh, Schaffer, & Nguyen, 2018). Okoh & Mbah (2023), Hoang & Hartner (2014), Haleem et al. (2018), and Hamid et al. (2022) found that the higher that the expected cost is a common reason for back sourcing of the previously outsourced services. It seems that higher than the expected cost is important to examining the back sourcing motivations.

Nguyen, 2018). Further, negative feedback could lead to harming the whole brand which needed to be avoided in any case to overcome from quality issues to keep the brand strong (Hoang & Hartner, 2014). At this point, the focal company has the option to back source.

From a strategic point of view, failing to achieve defined outsourcing goals is one of the most striking arguments for back sourcing. Hoang & Hartner (2014), Haleem et al. (2018), and Hamid et al. (2022) found that the poor service quality is a common reason for back sourcing of the previously outsourced services. Therefore, it is believed that the poor service quality is an important factor to examine the back sourcing motivations.

activity and they strive for higher control, the manager could simply back source the activity (Wong & Jeya, 2008). The loss of control happens when an outsourcing provider oversees core competencies or critical success factor for the focal company (Veltri et al., 2008). Losing control over the vendor's activities is also considered a central driver for back sourcing regarding possible principal-agent problems, such as inefficiencies through incorrect working directions and, especially, insecurity issues for sensitive information (Leyh, Schaffer, & Nguyen, 2018). Therefore, loss of control over outsourced services is an important factor in studying the reasons behind the decision for back sourcing.

changes in company strategies are important when considering the back sourcing reasons.

Changes in management within the outsourcing company are generally combined with shifts in the power distribution. When companies introduce new executives, these new members are three times more likely to provoke changes (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985). Most especially, new CEOs often 'reconsider the value being obtained from the outsourcing contract' and might find a different strategic value of the outsourced activities and back source (McLaughlin & Peppard, 2006).

According to Veltri et al. (2008), new management changes can lead to a repositioning and restructuring of internal and external competencies. The arrivals of new executives and the recognition of the importance of outsourced activities for the firm may set reintegration. The outsource decision makes sense in the first place but as the business environment changes, the reasons for

Changes in company strategies

Changes in company strategies can also be a reason for back sourcing. The environment might cause a business strategy to change, which can result in internal and external competencies being repositioned and restructured. For example, mergers and acquisition increase the size of the company and because of that the focal company could find new opportunities for outsourced activities. Due to the changed company, back sourcing could be more beneficial now than before resulting in a new decision regarding the activity. New resources may be viewed in a new light as being essential to the integration, development, and reconfiguration of other

Externally generated opportunities from external environmental changes

Hong & Hartner (2014), Silva et al. (2015), and Bary & Westner (2018) found that changes in

Changes in vender's organisational structure and strategies

External environmental changes can be consequences of external business changes or pressure from outside (Bary & Westner, 2018). Cacciatori and Jacobides (2005) showed that the manufacturing or industries pressure to reintegrate activities may come both from external changes regarding the demand environment and from internal changes such as company trying to protect or expand their position. Moreover, most companies report

outsourcing are no longer present (Tadelis, 2007).

Moreover, there is a shift in the top management; sourcing decision may change from outsourcing to insourcing because the new executives believe more in the internal provisioning of the services (Hoang & Hartner, 2014). The business changes could be internally, for example a change in executive management that can lead to shifts in corporate power. With new ideas and experiences in the management, changes in corporate strategy are likely to be triggered. This involves recognition of new roles for core business, in which companies may reposition and restructure its internal and external competences. Therefore, changes in management is an important factor in studying the reasons behind the decision for back sourcing.

internal and external resources to meet the changing requirements as part of the broader strategy redefinition. This allows resources to take on many characteristics of dynamic capabilities, which support the emergence of novel forms of competitive advantage. The client company may need to modify and back source activities to align with the evolving environment during the outsourcing assessment. Due to new strategic directions, activities viewed previously as commodity could now be a strategic resource, motivating the focal company to back source (Wong & Jeya, 2008). Therefore, Changes in company strategies is an important factor in studying the reasons behind the decision for back sourcing

vendor's organisational structure and strategies are important when considering back sourcing reasons.

structural changes just before the back sourcing decision is made. These changes constitute external business changes and include mergers, divestures, and acquisitions (Veltri et al. 2008). According to Veltri et al. (2008), structural changes like mergers and acquisitions are grounds for altering the sourcing strategy considering newly obtained resources or capabilities. This was the situation an example, where JP Morgan Chase cancelled its outsourcing contract following its merger with Bank One; following an unsatisfactory outsourcing arrangement, an effective in-house

service delivery model was developed (Barney et al., 2009; Amos & Gadzekpo, 2016).

It is also important to note that the possibility of shrinking the size of vender's organisation, because of the economy crises. The shrinking the size of vender's organisation's strategic direction will make them incompatible with the focal company

In addition, when external market conditions change, companies may feel a need to assess the threat followed by the rapid changes and safeguard its competitiveness by securing access and ownership of critical

Research Method

To answer the research question, what factors have gone into the decision to back source, qualitative methodology with a case study approach was chosen. Expert interview was conducted from the middle managers who have been involved in the back sourcing process of the facility management services in industries.

The qualitative methodology was employed. Because, compared to most quantitative methods, qualitative research can be completed more quickly and at a lower cost than most (Shiu et al., 2009). This is because a qualitative study's sample is substantially smaller than a quantitative study's. In qualitative descriptive research, which tries to

Step 1: Case selection and design of the data collection protocols

The design of the data collecting techniques and case selection are part of the first step. To find company/ business that have encountered the phenomenon of interest and are anticipated to offer independent confirmation of the findings, case selection employs convenience sampling (Yin 2014). Thus, based on the requirement that each business/ company have back sourced at least some of its facility management services previously done by a service provider/ vender. Four business/ companies including food, apparel, (private) hospital, and hotel were chosen from various industries in Sri Lanka, each serving as a separate case study.

The study's unit of analysis is the company's decision on back sourcing. The

(Wong & Jeya, 2008), and may create dissatisfaction to focal company. This structure changes in vender's company often increase the size of the focal company to create new internal departments, to look after the external services to have profit motives (Amos & Gadzekpo, 2016), and therefore create opportunities for it to operate more cost-effectively by back sourcing (Andersson & Eriksson, 2017).

resources. Therefore, changes in vendor organization and strategies are another important factor in studying the reasons behind the decision for back sourcing.

investigate and comprehend experiences rather than make statistical generalizations, small sample sizes are typical (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Four industries including food, apparel, (private) hospital, and hotel were chosen to enable a cross-sector comparison.

A case study approach was chosen (Yin, 2014). The ability to investigate the phenomenon in its real-life setting is a major advantage of the case study approach. A multiple case study approach was utilized (Patton, 2014), to inductively investigate the reasons for back sourcing and produce propositions as outputs. The three primary steps of study design are explained in this section.

example companies, which are listed in Table 3, are diverse in size, ranging from small and medium-sized businesses to those operating in the food, apparel, (private) hospital, and hotel industries. This enhances the findings' generalizability and makes it possible to compare different sectors/ industries. By using these selection criteria for the case samples, the authors can compile the Sri Lanka's prior back sourcing experience, which will be helpful for making fresh back sourcing judgments in the current economic crisis of Sri Lanka. The effects of economic crisis on facility management services may vary depending on the industry. Consequently, a cross-case comparison may help businesses make sense of pertinent results and decide on the advantages and disadvantages of back sourcing.

Table 3: Profile of respondents

Cases	Type of Industry	Num of Employees	Position of Respondent	Code for respondent	Experience
Case 1	Food Manufacturing	26	Quality Assurance Manager	R1	7 Years
Case 2	Apparel Manufacturing	52	Maintenance Manager	R2	17 Years
Case 3	Hospital (Private)	54	Chief Maintenance Engineer	R3	20 Years
Case 4	Hotel	35	General Manager	R4	8 Years

Step 2: Prepare and collect data

Individual case reports were prepared because of the data collection process. Multiple data gathering techniques, including semi-structured interviews and secondary data from company publications, if available, were used to build each case. Four thorough interviews, lasting 30 to 40 minutes each, were done with important informants from middle managers from the business/ industries, between June and August 2023.

One interview per case was found to be sufficient, and all the necessary data were recorded electronically (Ellram, 1996). We also used Yin's (2014) advice to construct a

preliminary procedure based on prior studies and published literature. The protocol included interview questions, research questions, and information about the design and methodology of the study (Ellram, 1996).

The interview questions focused mostly on the company's experiences with decisions about outsourcing and back sourcing, as well as the factors that encourage and hinder them. After the interviews were digitally recorded, written down, and manually coded, the results were given to the respondents for validation to strengthen the construct validity and lessen observer bias (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Step 3: Analyse and conclude

According to Yin (2014), a case study is typically chosen to address "how" and "why" questions, especially when the researcher has limited influence over the events themselves, as in real-life case studies. A case study typically refers to the same methodology to include two primary sources: the subject of direct observation and systematic interviews. The case study is made distinctive by these: the breadth of information derived from observations, documents, and interviews (Yin, 2014).

Findings

This section presents content case analysis which identifies across all four cases. Based on the findings, the details are related to the drivers for back sourcing discussed in three categories of reasons for back sourcing: problems with

To analyse the sampled case studies, Veltri et al.'s (2008) framework was used to find the reasons for back sourcing; three major categories of back sourcing reasons: 1) problems with contract, 2) internally generated opportunities stemming from organizational changes, and 3) externally generated opportunities arising from external environmental changes were used. All four cases have experienced with failure in outsourcing in facilities management services. Reasons behind the failure of outsourcing have been described by them in the finding's sections.

contract, internally generated opportunities from organizational changes, and externally generated opportunities from external environmental changes, as discovered by Veltri et al. (2008). Therefore, findings are discussed with these three categories of reasons for back sourcing.

Problems with contract

The following indicates comments that emphasise issues related to higher than the expected costs, poor service quality, and loss of control over outsourced services, identified in the problems with contract.

In Case 1, the respondent R1, is a Quality Assurance Manager in the Food Manufacturing industry, who has mentioned that formation of new department - Quality Assurance Department, and the cost reduction on the outsourced services are the reason to discontinue the outsourced services with the service provider. Earlier they have made a contractual agreement with a service provider for 'health and safety' procedures, for example fire safety, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HCCAP), Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH). And the rest of the safety obligations, for example worker's welfare, and quality related obligations have been covered by the administrative department and which department was responsible for many other tasks as well. It was observed that a frequent poor service quality from the service provider. This is because of the qualified staff who left the service provider's company and went abroad, because of the ongoing economy crises. This made poor service quality that is because of the poor responsiveness, a lack of professionalism, and delays in service deliveries by the vendor. Therefore, to ensure the quality in service, a new Quality Assurance Department has been created and the department has taken the charge to cover all the 'health and safety', for example fire safety, HCCAP, COSHH, safety procedures of manual handling, worker's welfare, and quality related obligations. To maintain these activities in a standard level in the Food Manufacturing company, a competent person who has been qualified in Health and Safety has been recruited to the newly created Quality Assurance Department. With this new recruitment of employee to the newly created - Quality Assurance - department, the back sourced facility management services are effectively handled in the current economy crises period.

In Case 2, the respondent R2 is a Maintenance Manager in the Apparel Manufacturing company, pointed out that they did not take

back all the services that are outsourced into their Apparel Manufacturing company. Instead of that, they brought many services together under one service provider. Earlier, due to lack of technical staffs at workplace, maintenance services, for example 'energy management' (elevator, escalator, heater, ventilator, and air conditioner) and 'fire safety' were outsourced into two different service providers to manage each of the said services. There are other maintenance services, for example, plumbing, painting, window cleaning, and gardening are managed by in-house staffs. This set up was operation for last three years. However, because of the dissatisfaction with the quality of the services delivered, inefficiencies through incorrect working directions by an outsourced service provider, and to reduce the cost on outsourced services, it was decided to cancel the contract agreement of the inefficient service provider. It also decided to merge all the previously outsourced services under one service provider. Accordingly, the Apparel Manufacturing company terminated the agreement with the service provider who provides the 'fire safety' service. This 'fire safety' service was given to the service provider who provides the energy management service, with a new agreement. With the reduced outsourced agreements from two to one, and managing other maintenance services by in-house staffs, the Apparel Manufacturing company's facility management services are effectively handled.

In Case 3, the respondent R3 is a middle manager who works as a Chief Maintenance Engineer in the (private) Hospital, has explained that they faced unsuccessful contract with two different outsourced service providers. The two of the outsourced services were Janitorial and Catering. Frequent complaints regarding the outsourced Janitorial services have been received through customer feedback. Since, the hospital building is directly contact with customer services and the movement of occupants in 24/7 is available in buildings within the hospital, cleaning services are often the key to hospitals. Because of the dissatisfaction with the quality of the services delivered by an outsourced Janitorial service provider, the outsourced contract was come to end by the hospital management, and a new Janitorial service was outsourced with the same cost. Secondly, the hospital management found

poor quality of the services in the outsourced catering service provider. The catering service was made available to provide meals for patients admitted in the hospital, the employees, and the visitors of the hospital. However, there were several complaints from patients regarding the quality of food. Then the hospital management discontinued the outsourced catering services and decided to build a precast in-house kitchen unit to manage the catering. This in-house kitchen is now managed by internal staff and the customers also satisfy with the catering service provided by set of newly recruited staff. The poor quality of services will lead to get negative image regards to the brand. As the hospital management worked hard to gain biggest market share in competitive market and to retain its brand name, the hospital management took timely decision to overcome the poor in service issue.

In Case 4, the respondent R4, who works as a General Manager in the Hostel, reviewed the reason behind the back sourcing was dissatisfaction in the outsourced maintenance service of the service provider. The hotel made an agreement with outsourced service provider for maintenance of boiler. The service that was provided by the outsourced service provider was not satisfied by the hotel management. Also, the service provider has not been come for regular maintenance, inspection, and review on time. There were several delays that observed in boiler maintenance services during

Internally generated opportunities from organizational changes

The following indicates comments that emphasise issues related to changes in management and changes in company strategies, identified in the internally generated opportunities from organizational changes.

In Case 1, the respondent R1, who works as a Quality Assurance Manager in the Food Manufacturing industry, stated that there was a change in executive management. The re-budgeting decision was made by top management led changes in organisational structure by form a new Quality Assurance department. A competent person who has been qualified in Health and Safety has been recruited to the newly created Quality Assurance department. The back sourcing

the peak hours. This delay made annoying by the visitors of the hotel and let to generate several complaints from customers. Because of this, and to reduce cost for spending outsourced activities, the hotel management decided to close the contract with the outsourced service provider. Hostel management trained in-house technician for the maintenance of boiler. Therefore, now-a-days, in-house technicians are taking the charge to maintain the boiler and the existing Maintenance manager is responsible for regular check-ups and documentation procedure.

The above comments emphasise issues related to 'problems with contract'. It is evident that all four respondents have been experienced both: the 'cost' and the 'poor quality services' are the main reason for the back sourcing. Therefore 'cost' and 'poor service quality' are the basic criteria determining the reason for back sourcing in the facility management services in industries in Sri Lanka. Another reason to terminate the contract of facility management is 'loss of control'. It is because of the observed gap between the expected service and the delivered service given by the service provider. Therefore, they come to an end to terminate the outsourced which the company felt dissatisfaction. Therefore, cost, poor-quality services, and loss of control are important for the consideration of back sourcing of the facility management services in Sri Lankan industries.

decision was informed to vendor by the new management. When our food manufacturing industry undertakes the back sourcing decision, it considered knowledge transfer as a two-way process between the Food Manufacturing industry and vendor. As a result, the newly recruited person was trained regarding the health and safety. Then the new department look after the services related to health and safety and prepared policies for health and safety, working procedure for handling works, risk assessment documentation, and fire safety inspection procedures. Periodic training and motivation also given to in-house service providers to improve service quality and delivery. The importance of Health and Safety and quality aspects at workplace is emerging and there are many legislations and enforcements to comply with such aspects. Therefore, it is always better to carry on the

essential works by the internal self to get the outcome as expected and satisfied.

In Case 3, the respondent R3 is a middle manager who works as a Chief Maintenance Engineer in the (private) Hospital, stated that there was a change in executive management. The respondent R3 further stated that after receiving frequent complaints from customers regarding the outsourced catering service provider, the outsourced contract was come to end by the hospital management. A new in-house kitchen unit was constructed to manage the catering services. This in-house kitchen is now managed by internal staff and the customers also satisfy with the catering service provided by set of newly recruited staff. As the hospital management took timely decision, the outsourced services are back sourced to provide a satisfactory service to customers.

In Case 4, the respondent R4, who works as a General Manager in the Hotel, stated that there was a change in executive management. The respondent R4 further explained that after noted dissatisfaction in the outsourced boiler maintenance service of the service provider, the hotel management decided to close the contract with the outsourced service provider and decided to back source the services. To provide

Externally generated opportunities from external environmental changes

The following indicates comments that emphasise issues related to changes in the vendor's organisation and strategies, identified in the externally generated opportunities from external environmental changes.

Only case 01 has highlighted that they experienced the external environmental threat. According to the respondent R1, who works as a Quality Assurance Manager in the Food Manufacturing industry, reported that the pressure in the competitive market made themselves to work and focus hard to create a new department to look after the previously outsourced activities. It is observed many employees moved to abroad in the vender's company, because of the ongoing economy crises in Sri Lanka. Because of this the vender made several structure changes to shrink the size of vender's organisation. This structural changes in the vender's organisation made a

the boiler maintenance service, the hotel management trained in-house technician for the maintenance of boiler. This training was conducted by the previously outsourced vender. An existing maintenance manager was responsible for regular check-ups and documentation procedure. Since the hotel management took decision to train technician as a strategy to sustain the maintenance of boiler, at present, the boiler maintenance service is functioning effectively.

The above comments emphasise issues related to internally generated opportunities from organizational changes. It is evident that three cases have been experienced both Changes in executive management and changes in company strategies are the reason for the back sourcing. With new ideas and experiences in the management, changes in corporate strategy are likely to be triggered when unsatisfactory services are offered by the outsources services. This involves recognition of new roles for core business, in which companies may reposition and restructure its internal and external competences. Therefore, Changes in management and changes in company strategies are important for the consideration of back sourcing of the facility management services in Sri Lankan industries. dissatisfying outsourcing relationship. This structural changes in vendor's organisation and strategies led the Food Manufacturing business to terminate contract and to consider internal structural changes to increase the size of the company, by creation a new department to look after the outsourced activities, and therefore create opportunities for it to operate more cost-effectively by back sourcing. The management appointed a skilled employee within the Food Manufacturing business to accumulate internal knowledge during the back sourcing process.

The above comments emphasise a failure in outsourcing of the facility management services in the Food Manufacturing industry. This failure in outsourcing was because of the changes vendor's organisation and strategies. To overcome the issue, the focal company has increased the size of the company by creating a new department to look after the outsourced activities back in-house. Therefore, changes in vendor's organisation and strategies are important for the consideration of back

sourcing of the facility management services in Sri Lankan industries.

According to the comments discussed in the findings section, illustrated that each case has faced failure in outsourcing of the facility

management services for different reasons. The failure in outsourcing made a consideration and implementation of back sourcing process of the facility management services back in-house. The Table 4 lists the Empirical findings on reasons behind the decision of back sourcing.

Table 4: Empirical findings on reasons behind the decision of back-sourcing

Reasons	Respondents' response			
	R1 – Case 1	R2 - Case 2	R3- Case 3	R4 – Case 4
Problems with contract				
Cost	√	√	√	√
Poor quality services	√	√	√	√
Loss of control		√		
Internally generated opportunities from organizational changes				
Changes in management	√		√	√
Changes in company strategies	√		√	√
Externally generated opportunities from external environmental changes				
Changes in vendor's organisation and strategies	√			

Discussion

The roots of outsourcing are located within facility management services (Lok et al. 2020). Many modern business relies on facility management services, either non-capacity outsourcing when it comes to the externally employed electrician or capacity outsourcing, when it comes to the lorries to deliver goods and services (Veltri et al., 2008). This research took cases that were back sourced its previously outsourced facility management services, to identify back sourcing reasons in facilities management services in Sri Lankan.

We have been able to characterize companies' back sourcing reasons in the Sri Lankan industries through the comparative analysis of sampling case studies, which will be helpful for businesses looking to execute back sourcing strategies to sustain in the business. In doing so, findings are explained considering the 'why' and 'how' strategy.

Regarding the 'why' question, all respondents said that the dissatisfaction with the quality of the services delivered was the starting point for back sourcing consideration. Results further revealed that the high in cost and poor service quality are common reasons for back sourcing of the previously outsourced services. These findings are in line with Hoang & Hartner (2014), Haleem et al. (2018), Hamid et al. (2022), and Okoh & Mbah (2023), who assert that while cost remains a significant

consideration, there are several other factors that influence back sourcing decisions. These include productivity, flexibility, and quality of services, as well as functional benefits like easy access to technology, skills, and knowledge, learning opportunities, and market access. The high in cost and poor service quality factors, which all belong to the 'problems with contract' are consistent with a previous study by Hoang & Hartner (2014), Haleem et al. (2018), Hamid et al. (2022), and Okoh & Mbah (2023) referring to industries back sourcing consideration. This discussion leads to the following proposition:

Proposition 1: While the predominant motivation for Sri Lankan industries outsourcing is mainly cost-oriented, a strategic shift aimed at enhance the service quality has a pivotal role in the back sourcing decision.

Further, three out of four business/ company in this study stated that the reasons for back sourcing were changes in executive management and changes in company strategies. These factors, which are all part of the 'internally generated opportunities from organizational changes', line up with findings from a prior study by Hoang & Hartner (2014) who found that both changes in executive management and changes in company strategies were led towards a back sourcing

decision that is to take an outsourced function back in-house, and positively influence the back sourcing decision. Furthermore, the effects of a shift in executive management due to their prior experience with outsourcing or their stronger support for an internal department or services, which could lead to a back sourcing choice, are covered by McLaughlin and Peppard (2006), Veltri et al. (2008), and Bary & Westner (2018). When the company undertakes the back sourcing decision, it must consider knowledge transfer as a two-way process between the company and vendor (Bhagwatwar et al., 2011). After the back sourcing, it is important to provide periodic training and motivation to in-house service providers to improve service quality and delivery (Amos & Gadzekpo, 2016).

Proposition 2: Back sourcing can stem from organizational changes, such as management shifts and strategic adjustments in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

This research addresses the reasons behind the successful re-integration process when industries employ back sourcing in facilities management services as their sourcing strategy. To expand the understanding of back sourcing, a literature review of this phenomenon is given, and based on findings from cases in different industries, we present reasons behind back sourcing that is to bring facilities management services back in-house. There are reasons for the failures of outsourcing have been identified. These reasons are brought through by the middle managers who have been involved in the back sourcing process of the facility management services.

High in cost and poor service quality were identified as key factors that influence the decision to back source its previously outsourced facility management services back in-house. Changes in executive management

Future research area

Outsourcing was often used as a solution in high-peak economy situations. Sri Lanka experiences the worst economic crisis in decades (The World Bank, 2022). As part of an all-encompassing plan to address every industry and get out of the economic crisis, many Sri Lankan industries has shown interest

Finally, one case in this study stated that the reasons for back sourcing were the changes in vendor's organisation and strategies. This factor is part of the externally generated opportunities from external environmental changes, line up with findings from a prior study by Hoang & Hartner (2014) who found that changes in vendor's organisation and strategies, was the triggering factor for the managers in the focal company to take the back sourcing (Hoang & Hartner, 2014). When the company undertakes the back sourcing process, it is important to retain qualified staff within the company to both monitor and compare the vendor's quality as well as for fostering internal knowledge development during the outsourcing phase to make the process of back sourcing easier (Benaroch et al., 2012).

Proposition 3: Back sourcing can stem from the changes in vendor structure and strategies due to external factors.

and changes in company strategies, which are all part of the 'internally generated opportunities from organizational changes' were the second prioritise reasons for back sourcing. The changes in vendor's organisation and strategies, which is part of the externally generated opportunities from external environmental changes was least ranked factors that influence the decision to keep facility management services in-house.

Moreover, internal facility management services need to update and examine the service level specification on a regular basis (Amos & Gadzekpo, 2016). For internal facility management services, a thorough performance management system must be implemented together with recurring training and encouragement. This will inevitably result in the creation of the supportive atmosphere needed to improve services that is important to industries.

to back sourcing in facilities management services as their sourcing strategy. As the field of facility management services back sourcing has gotten less attention, further studies should be conducted in this field to investigate broader range of factors including productivity and flexibility, as well as functional benefits like easy access to technology, skills, and

knowledge, learning opportunities, and market access, when examining the back sourcing motivations.

Companies do not publicly disclose the back sourcing choice factors that are not covered by the media, such hidden benefits are environmental sustainability, improved customer experience, technological advancements and innovation, improved risk management, accelerated time-to-market, and resource optimization may strengthen the case for outsourcing. Further research may look at the hidden benefits of back sourcing choice.

Further research may look at external factors that influence the decision to outsource, like customer preference for local business and political pressure brought on by an increase in various industries. Research may provide advice on how to reintegrate the back sourced operations by endorsing different organizational structures that are most suited to meet the criteria of back sourcing in the economic crisis.

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- Furthermore, since most current research focuses on the perspective of the back sourcing company, considering the vendor's point of view to investigate potential reasons for vendor termination or the impact of a broader back sourcing trend on vendors' business models could help develop a more comprehensive understanding of the back sourcing phenomenon.
- The decision to engage in back sourcing carries significant implications for organizations, necessitating the management of organizational change, knowledge reintegration, and the development of new capabilities and competencies (Kotlarsky & Bognar, 2012). Despite the increasing interest in back sourcing, there remains a dearth of research focusing on facility management back sourcing activities in the large-scale entrepreneurship companies. Therefore, future research should study the back sourcing activities in the large-scale entrepreneurship companies in Sri Lanka.
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