

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS-A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS IN TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT: Stress and its disastrous consequences has spread its tentacles in all the sectors, more importantly in the banking sector because of the rapid changes which is taking place in this sector. The intense competition in introducing innovative products and services to satisfy the divergent customer needs has forced the employees to be always on their toes. The employees in the banking sector are experiencing a tremendous amount of pressure at the work place. Hence the objective of this research paper was to identify and compare the factors causing stress among employees in public and private sector banks and suggest suitable remedies for the same. Statistical tools like factor analysis, regression, chi square and Man-whitney test has been used.

KEYWORDS: Job satisfaction, public and private sector banks, stress.

INTRODUCTION

The modern world which is said to be a world of race for material success and achievements is invariably a world of stress. Right from the day of birth till the last breath of man, an individual is exposed to various stressful situations. In this fast changing world today, no individual is free from stress and no profession is stress free. Stress comes in many forms and affects people of all ages and all walks of life. People experience stress everywhere, whether it is in the family or in the business organization. Stress has become an inevitable part of human life in recent times and it makes life more challenging and charming, if it is within limits.

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Occupational stress relates to the experience of stress in one's place of work, occupation or employment. Occupational stress is defined as adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological and or behavioral deviations for organizational participants.

Occupational stress is a state of tension that is created when a person responds to the demands and pressures that come from work, family and other external sources, as well as those that are internally generated from self imposed demands, obligations and self criticism. The terms work stress, job stress, or occupational stress is used interchangeably (Dollard 2003). Employers and governments have had increasing concern about occupational stress for over twenty years (Le Fevre, et al. 2003). In the past decade, effects of economic globalization and rapid technological changes have resulted in increased workloads and a faster pace in the work place (Dollard 2003).

NEED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

Occupational stress and its disastrous consequences have been observed in all the sectors, industries and organizations. One such industry which has gone into massive changes over the last ten years is the banking industry. Banking industry is the most important constituent of the financial sector of any economy. With the opening of the banking sector nationalized banks had to face fierce competition from private and foreign banks. It is here, the banks understood that infrastructure, and capital and technology are replicable but not human capital which is a valuable resource for achieving competitive edge. Nationalized banks too started introducing newer products and services to keep the profit margin at a safer level and survive in the market. Competent and energetic work force with high skill level both hard and soft became crucial to market the products and services and cater to the needs and requirements of the customers. With this background the present study made an attempt to understand the impact and intricacies of occupational stress on employees in the banking sector and suggest suitable measures to be taken by the bank managements to have a competent, productive and stress free workforce to meet the present and future challenges.

Although a lot of studies have been conducted on occupational stress and job satisfaction in various sectors, there are very few studies conducted in the banking sector. Today banking is a fast growing service industry and hence the high staff morale is very much important to deal with the customers effectively and positively. Hence, in this research paper an attempt is made to identify and suggest remedies to specific problems of bank employees related to job stress.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify and compare the factors causing stress among employees in public and private sector banks.
2. To suggest measures for a stress free environment for the bank employees.

HYPOTHESIS

H1: Employees of private banks experience more stress than public sector bank employees

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a. Research design: The study has been partly descriptive and partly diagnostic. The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

i. Primary data: The primary data for this research paper was collected through survey method using a well-structured questionnaire.

ii. Secondary data: The data from secondary sources is collected through books, journals, reports, research studies, internet sources, magazines, newspapers, and bank websites to understand the basic concepts and literature pertaining to stress in general and occupational stress of bank employees in particular.

iii. Sampling method: The total number of public sector banks is 27 and private sector banks are 30 in India. The researcher has taken 3 public sector banks and 3 private sector banks for the purpose of the study. The researcher has used disproportionate stratified random sampling and chosen 30 percent of the population as its sample.

iv. Sample size: A sample size of 537 respondents from banks, of which 411 employees were from public sector banks and 126 employees from private banks, was taken for the study.

Field work for data collection

The researcher himself has collected the responses by making personal visits to the respondents at their convenience. The data thus collected were categorized and processed manually and further it was cross checked through computers. Further processing was done with the help of the master table. The data were fed into computers for analysis and the results were appropriately incorporated.

The objectives of the study warranted the selection of a state where predominant banking activities are carried out. Among the states of India, the choice had fallen on Tamil Nadu for the conduct of the present study because the state occupies 5th position in the country on its size, it has a vast potential and scope for the banking activities and has a predominant agriculture involvement as well as industrial involvement that may bring to limelight still more banking organisations successfully in the future also.

v. Data processing and statistical analysis: 5 point Likert scale was used for the study with 1=Most stressful, 2= more stressful, 3= stressful, 4= less stressful, 5= least stressful. Descriptive statistics were used to obtain the mean and standard deviations. The researcher has utilized Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze and interpret the data to be presented in this study. Techniques like Chi-square test, Anova, and regression analysis were also used.

CAUSES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG BANK EMPLOYEES

From the literature, the researcher has identified 72 variables that cause stress in people. Using SPSS, the factor analysis was run and 72 variables were reduced into 13 manageable factors.

Factor 1	Job conditions	18 variables such as job insecurity, demanding work, inadequate explanation etc
Factor 2	Physical environment and repressive union activities	14 variables such as union problems, frequent meetings, lack of canteen, proper transport facilities etc.
Factor 3	Work life balance	7 variables such as tight work schedules, lot of concentration required, lack of recognition etc
Factor 4	Inadequate planning of work	5 variables such as Forced / unpaid overtime/long hours, Too much pressure to complete tasks etc
Factor 5	Job ambiguity	6 variables such as lack of control over job, confusion over who should do what job etc.
Factor 6	Demands of the family	6 variables such as daily requirements of the family, child's education etc.
Factor 7	Adaptability to change	2 variables such as coping up with new techniques, ideas, technology, innovations or new challenges
Factor 8	Absence of employee involvement	2 variables such as close supervision and Indifference/ partiality shown by the superiors
Factor 9	Undue expectations from job	2 variables such as fear of making mistakes which could lead to serious consequences and lot of expectations from the superiors
Factor 10	Job rigidity	3 variables such as frequent transfers, attending more than one customer at a time etc
Factor 11	Lack of efficient manpower	2 variables such as inadequate Staff and seniors taking VRS and hence pressure on juniors
Factor 12	Performance pressure	2 variables such as fixed targets\recovery to be achieved and strict rules to be followed at every process of work
Factor 13	Unforeseen contingencies	3 variables such as work at the year end, illness of any of the family members etc.

Factors such as job conditions, job ambiguity, demands of the family, absence of employee involvement and performance pressure caused stress in both the banks. Factors such as Physical environment and repressive union activities, work life imbalance, inadequate planning of work, adaptability to change, job rigidity, lack of efficient manpower, and unforeseen contingencies caused more stress in public sector banks. Factor undue expectations from job were more stressful in private banks.

Regression analysis was performed to evaluate the significant factors causing stress at the work place in public and private banks.

Table 1. REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CAUSING STRESS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BANKS

Type of Bank		Unstandardized		Standardized	t	p
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
Public	(Constant)	.109	.086		1.264	.207
	Job Conditions	.168	.036	.194	4.708	.000
	Physical Environment & repressive union activities	.040	.031	.047	1.290	.198
	Work life Imbalance	.002	.029	.003	.075	.941
	Inadequate planning of work	.084	.023	.107	3.614	.000
	Job ambiguity	.017	.028	.020	.609	.543
	Demands of family	.138	.024	.175	5.727	.000
	Adaptability to change	.024	.023	.031	1.035	.301
	Absence of employ involvement	.028	.023	.045	1.249	.212
	Undue expectation from job	.113	.027	.161	4.241	.000
	Job rigidity	.048	.023	.055	2.080	.038
	Lack of efficient manpower	.178	.020	.275	8.761	.000
	Unforeseen contingencies	.131	.030	.146	4.414	.000
	Performance pressure	.180	.020	.228	8.895	.000
Private	(Constant)	-.358	.144		-2.494	.014
	Job Conditions	.028	.073	.030	.381	.704
	Physical Environment & repressive union activities	.249	.063	.284	3.969	.000
	Work life Imbalance	.113	.081	.114	1.395	.166
	Inadequate planning of work	.013	.069	.014	.183	.855
	Job ambiguity	.043	.067	.045	.642	.522
	Demands of family	.013	.053	.016	.246	.806
	Adaptability to change	.185	.041	.201	4.486	.000
	Absence of employee involvement	.247	.043	.314	5.779	.000
	Undue expectation from job	.145	.048	.182	3.032	.003
	Job rigidity	.091	.055	.103	1.651	.102
	Lack of efficiency manpower	.106	.046	.133	2.297	.023
	Unforeseen contingencies	.112	.058	.122	1.998	.047
	Performance pressure	.088	.053	.103	1.674	.097

Source: Field survey

Table 2. BANKS WITH ADJUSTED R SQUARE VALUE AND RESULTS OF ANOVA FOR STRESS

Type of Bank	Model	R	R Square	ANOVA F Value.	P Value
Public	1	.910	.829	147.738	.000
Private	1	.938	.879	62.871	.000

Source: Field survey

Here the stress level is taken as the dependent variable and all the 13 factors causing stress taken as independent variables. Regression analysis is performed separately for private banks and public sector banks. All the 13 factors has 82.9% influence on job stress in public sector and 87.9% influence in private sector.

In public sector banks, job conditions, inadequate planning of work, demands of the family, undue expektations from job, job rigidity, lack of efficient manpower, unforeseen contingencies and performance pressure have significant effect on stress level as for all the cases $p < 0.05$. Further among all these factors lack of efficient manpower and performance pressure have more effect as standard $\beta > 0.2$ followed by job conditions ($\beta = .194$), demands of the family ($\beta = .175$), undue expektations from job ($\beta = .161$), unforeseen contingencies ($\beta = .146$) and job rigidity has least effect on stress ($\beta = .055$) and rest of the factors have no significant effect on stress level.

In private banks, physical environment and repressive union activities, adaptability to change, absence of employee involvement, undue expektations from job, lack of efficeint manpower, unforeseen contingencies and performance pressure has significant effect on stress level as for all the cases $p < 0.05$. Further among all these factors absence of employee involvement has more effect as standard $\beta > 0.3$ followed by physical environment and repressive union activities ($\beta = .284$), adaptability to change ($\beta = .201$), undue expektations from job ($\beta = .182$), lack of efficient manpower ($\beta = .133$), unforeseen contingencies ($\beta = .122$), and performance pressure has least effect on stress ($\beta = .103$) and rest of the factors has no significant effect on stress level.

Under the strict vigilance of RBI particularly during and after the global economic crisis banks have to comply with the national and international standards. Therefore it has become common for the banks to fix high targets for deposit mobilisation, loan disbursement and other investments, loan recovery, growth and profitability etc. These targets always kept the employees on their toes with pressure to complete tasks by staying overtime or sometimes forced to stay for longer hours, attend frequent meetings which have created an enormous pressure on employees. With the advancement in science and technology most of the banking services are automated. But all the automated services such as mobile banking, internet banking etc are not popular and has not penetrated. As a result still there is a huge crowd in bank branches and they lack sufficient number of efficient employees.

HYPOTHESIS 1: EMPLOYEES OF PRIVATE BANKS EXPERIENCE MORE STRESS THAN PUBLIC SECTOR BANK EMPLOYEES

Table 3. CHI-SQUARE TEST RESULT FOR STRESS WITH THE DEMANDS OF WORK

Type of Bank		Frequency of stress with the demands oi			' work	X ² Value	P Value
		Always	Sometimes	Rarely			
Public	F	15	311	85	411	3.342	.188
	%	3.6%	75.7%	20.7%	100.0%		
Private	F	8	86	32	126		
	%	6.3%	68.3%	25.4%	100.0%		
Total	F	23	397	117	537		
	%	4.3%	73.9%	21.8%	100.0%		

Source: Field survey

Chi square test was used to test the hypothesis that 'employees of private banks experience more stress than public sector bank employees'. The test stated that there is no significant difference between public and private sector banks with respect to the level of stress experienced with the demands of the work as $\chi^2 = 3.342$, $p = 0.188$.

Table 4. MANN - WHITNEY TEST RESULT FOR LEVEL OF STRESS DUE TO JOB

Variables	Type of bank	Mean	S.D	% Mean	Z Value	P Value
Level of stress due to job	Public	3.0	.563	60.10	1.907	.057
	Private	3.09	.704	61.75		
	Total	3.02	.600	60.48		

Source: Field survey

Further when it is tested for difference by Mann Whitney Test, shows stress level is non significant ($Z=1.907$, $p=0.057$). Hence the Hypothesis 1 employees of private banks experience more stress than public sector bank employees is rejected.

With the entry of private and foreign banks, the public sector banks have geared up their competition and started offering new types of products and services which are in par with the services offered by the private banks. Technology up gradation and the quality of service in public sector banks have improved. The public sector banks are forced to operate beyond their office time to offer customized services to their customers. Unlike the study of Malik N (2011), Katyal S et al. (2011) where they stated that the employees from private banks experience more stress than the employees of public sector banks while Sharma J and Devi A (2011) stated that public sector employees feel stressful for being pigeonholed in one position for long and the lack of growth and learning opportunities in the public sector banks. But the present study states that employees of both public sector and private sector banks experience the same level of stress.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A STRESS FREE ENVIRONMENT AT THE WORK PLACE

In banks, promotions are tied to the transfers. Many a times to avoid the transfer employees forego the promotion which has negative effect on the growth and profitability of the bank. Keeping this in mind banks can motivate the eligible employees by assuring them the least inconvenience caused by the transfers. The location fitment can be done according to the employees' preference which would help them to be more productive at the work place. It is quite important to see that organization driven policies be well planned and communicated well in advance, so as to cause least stress to the employees in implementation. During the field work the respondents opined that when there was heavy work load they work on holidays for which they have no complaints. But they wish to get a comp off on the day they require. Therefore it is desirable for the banks to respect the feelings of their employees.

The Head office should allot a capable person as the branch head to the bank or else the employees working in the bank will have lots of trouble in dealing with their boss which would lead to stress. Banks should send their employees for training and on completion of their exams and if they pass, the fees should be reimbursed. This would be a motivation to others to take up their training and promotion exams. Resource persons for the training program should be a mixture of people both from within the bank and from outside. This would make the employees within the organization proud and happy that they got a chance to address their colleagues and share their knowledge and experience. Resource persons from outside the organization would bring in innovative ideas and thoughts.

The work of the employees should be reviewed periodically and not just at the end of the year. This would give them a boost to perform better and keep them on their toes. The employees should be motivated to take up and learn new things. Banks should provide town hall sessions to employees where they get a chance to open up freely with the higher level. As the population in most of the public sector banks are on the verge of retirement, banks should incorporate programmes to get the best manpower to fill up this gap. For this the banks should conduct IBPS coaching programmes by tying up with colleges and social organizations so that awareness is created amongst the youth about the job opportunities which will be created in the banks. Fernando W (2007) stated that the inadequacy of experienced staff in banks was considered to be another reason for increased level of stress. Hence those banks where there is shortage of staff, adequate manpower should be provided by the bank management.

CONCLUSION

The psychosocial well being of an employee is crucial to have a productive work force. The productivity of the work force determines the success of an organization. In an age of highly dynamic and competitive world, bank employees are exposed to all kinds of stressors that can affect them on all realms of life. The growing importance of interventional strategies is felt more at organizational level.

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