



WORKPLACE STRESS AND THEIR EFFECT ON BANKING EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Everyone who has ever held a job has, at some point, felt the pressure of work-related stress. It is unavoidable and uncertain and with the ever changing economical, technological and legal environment the workload over organisations to cop up with updated and advanced technologies along with keeping a track of new norms and rules is increasing immensely which gets further delegated and end up to employees and workers as because they are the ones who perform operational tasks of any job. Any job can have stressful elements, even if you love what you do, and excessive stress in workplace result in lower productivity, following study is an attempt to determine and analyze the existing and potential stressors among employees. The study was conducted in five branches of Punjab national bank located in Lucknow was taken. Around 200 employees of the banks were interviewed in the process of data collection. The study concluded that employees of the selected bank are experiencing high degree of stress with respect to the dimensions of poor peer relation.

KEYWORDS: stress, environmental change, stressors, productivity, peer relations

INTRODUCTION

According to Ivancevich and Matteson: Stress is an adaptive response mediated by individual characteristics or psychological process that is a consequence of any external actions situation or event that places special physical or psychological demands upon a person.

Stress is basically the impact of one object on another. Stress refers to the strain appear the conflict between our external environment and us, leading to emotional and physical pressure.

FEATURES OF STRESS

- Stress may result into any kind of deviation physical psychological or behavioral from the normal in the person
- Stress may be the result of individual interaction with environmental stimuli. Such stimuli may be in any form interpersonal interaction, event, etc. The impact of the stimuli produces deviation in the individual.
- It is not necessary that stress is always dysfunctional. There may be some stresses called eustress like stress for creative work, entrepreneurial activities, keen competition which stimulates better productivity.
- Stress can be either temporary mild severe depending on how long its causes continue ,how powerful they are and how strong the individual is

Workplace stress is a condition arising from the interaction of the people and their jobs and is characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning Job stress arises when demands exceeds abilities, while job related strains are reactions or outcome resulting from the experience of the job that don't match the capabilities ,resources ,or needs of the worker . Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury .The work when taken as challenge and a little bit of stress is prevalent it is found to be good as challenge energizes us psychologically and physically ,motivates us to learn new skills and master our jobs . When a challenge is met we feel satisfied but when it is not met we feel tensed and dissatisfied.

Cooper (1983; 1985) summarized and categorized six factors responsible for stress

1. Factors intrinsic to the job (heat, noise, chemical fumes, shift work)
2. Relationships at work (conflict with co-workers or supervisors, lack of social support)
3. Role in the organization (for example, role ambiguity)
4. Career development (lack of status, lack of prospects for promotion, lack of a career path, job insecurity)
5. Organizational structure and climate (lack of autonomy, lack of opportunity to participate in decision making, lack of control over the pace of work)
6. Home and work interface (conflict between domestic and work roles; lack of spousal support for remaining in the workforce).

Not all individual experience stress with the same intensity. Some people overreact to stressors and get highly stressed. Others have the stamina, endurance and composure to cope with any stressors. How an individual experiences stress depend on the

- i) the person's perception of the situation

- ii) the person's past experience
- iii) the presence and absence of social support
- iv) individual differences with regards to stress reaction

Stressors at workplace: Stressors originate at the individual, group, organization and extra organizational levels

Individual level stressors: these relate directly to the person's personality and job responsibilities. Expertise estimate that each year more than 10 million workers develop computer related vision problems that require a trip to an optometrist. Forty percent of these people use glasses while working on video display terminals. The most common are:

- i) Personality types: in respect of personality two concepts –
Type A personality: is prone to stress and is associated with behavioral pattern such as always moves, walks, eats rapidly, feel impatient and worry a lot
Type B personality: is less prone to stress. They show behavioral pattern such as not concerned about time, calm and composed
- ii) Role overload: too much work causes stress to an employee
- iii) Role conflict: role conflict occurs when people face competing demands
- iv) Role ambiguity: it exist when employees are uncertain about their responsibilities, performance expectations and level of authority
- v) Task characteristics: are also individual level stressors. Tasks are more stressful when they involve decision making, monitoring equipment or exchanging information with others.

Group level stressors: group level stressors are caused by group dynamics and managerial behavior. Managers create stress for employees by

- i) Exhibiting inconsistent behaviors
- ii) Failing to provide support
- iii) Showing lack of concern
- iv) Providing inadequate direction
- v) Focusing on negatives while ignoring good performance

Organizational level stressors:

- i) Organizational climate: a high pressure environment at places chronic work demands fuels stress response such as poor lighting, loud noise, dirty and smelly environment poor infrastructure

- ii) Organizational leadership: represent the managerial style of the organization's senior executive .They establish unrealistic pressures to perform in the short run and impose excessively tight controls.
- iii) Organizational structure: defines the level of differentiation, the degree of rules and regulation where decisions are made.

Extra organizational level stressors: are caused by factors outside the organization. For instance, conflicts associated with one's career and family are stressful. Home life certainly impacts one's attitude and performance. Death of spouse, injury, failure in school or at work, unplanned pregnancy etc.

Stressors at the individual level have been studied more than any other category. Role conflicts, role ambiguity, role overload and under load is widely examined individual stressors (Newton and Keenan 1987)

Stress is a prevalent and costly problem in today's workplace. About one third of workers report high levels of stress. One quarter of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives. Three quarters of employees believe the worker has more on the job stress than a generation ago. Evidence also suggests that stress is the major cause of turnover in organizations. Stress related problems cost the national economy crores of rupees and is one of the major factors of the nation's lagging productivity.

Not only stress affects us cognitively but it also affects us behaviorally and physically. There is a significant relationship between stress and health problems. Job stress that is associated with various biological reactions may ultimately lead to compromised health, such as cardiovascular disease, headache, sleeping pattern. Moreover stress at workplace tends to increase the chances of workplace accident, low motivation in employees, low productivity. Banking sector is reckoned as a hub and barometer of the financial system. As a pillar of the economy, this sector plays a predominant role in the economic development of the country. Over the last ten years the banking industry has gone through some sweeping changes.

One of the recent changes that critically hampered the working of employees in banking sector is demonetization. Following the demonetization move of the union government, banking sector was the most and adversely affected area .Employees working for an average 12-14 hours a day resulted in sleep deprivation, burnout and extreme mood swings among employees. Workload beyond ones capacity, ambiguity in defining duties & responsibilities, lack of support from superiors, lack of authority to control resources, absence of autonomy in taking decisions, work life imbalance etc. are

some of the sources of stress in organizations which in turn affect the mental and physical wellbeing of employees

The advent of technological revolution in all walks of life coupled with globalization, privatization policies has drastically changed conventional patterns in all sectors. Globalization and privatization led policies compelled the banking sector to reform and adjust to have a competitive edge to cope with multinationals led environment

Stress management: efforts should be made to overcome the negative impact consequences of high stress. Such action may be taken at individual level as well as organizational level

Individual coping strategies- Following are the major individual coping strategies:

Physical exercise: different types of exercises such as jogging, walking, swimming, playing etc. are good method of overcoming stress

Relaxation: impact of stress can be overcome by relaxation. Some techniques are biofeedback and meditation. In biofeedback, the individual learns the internal rhythms of a particular body process through electronic feedback that is wired to the body area. From this feedback, the person can learn to control body process in question.

Meditation involve concentrated inner thought in order to rest the body physically and emotionally

Work home transition: it is also like relaxation technique .In this technique; a person may attend to less pressure inducing type or routine work during the last 30-60 minutes of work time

Cognitive therapy: in these techniques lectures and interactive discussion sessions are arranged to help participants.

Networking: it is the formation of close association with trusted, empathetic co-workers and colleagues who are good listeners and confidence builders.

Organizational coping strategies- Following are the major organizational coping strategies:

Supportive organizational climate

Job enrichment: jobs can be enriched by improving content factor such as responsibility, recognition, opportunity for achievement and advancement or improving core job characteristics.

Organizational role clarity: Role analysis technique helps both managers and employees what the job entails and what the expectations are.

Career planning and counseling

Employee's assistance program: it tends to be based on medical approach to treatment and involve following

Diagnosis: employee with problem asks for help. Eap staff attempt to diagnose problem

Treatment: counseling or therapy is provided

Screening: periodic examination of employees detect early indicators of problem

Prevention: education and persuasion are used to convince employees who are at high risk of stress.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Van Rhenen et al. (2007), the author found that high levels of stress may also result in increased staff turnover, higher accident rates, more physical ill-health, more psychological ill-health and absenteeism .Figures showed that the loss of working days for industry in the US amounts to about 550 million (3–7%) each year and for the UK this figure is 3.7% of the total number of working days.

Kivimaki et al. (2002) People with a very high workload, as indicated by working continuously over 11 hours a day, may be at high risk of cardiovascular disease .It was found that employees reporting high job strain and high effort-reward imbalance had a twofold higher risk of death a

Moore and Cooper (1996) presented a theoretical overview. Findings indicate that although mental health professionals are subjected to similar organizational stressors as other workers, they experience additional emotional strain by the very nature of their professions in dealing with troubled persons often over extended periods of time

Sutherland and Cooper (1990) found that psychological ill health (anxiety, depression) was primarily predicted by high levels of job demands, demanding customers, lack of social support, coping strategies and administrative tasks.

(Leong, Furnham, Cooper, 1996) The author tested the role of commitment as part of the appraisal strategy in the pathway stress/strain. The result of this study indicates that occupational stress was the only statistically significant predictor of mental and physical ill-health and Commitment appeared to be only a predictor for job satisfaction and intention to leave.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present research work is intended:

1. To assess the level of stress among bank employees on the 12 dimensions of occupational stress index(OSI)
2. To identify those dimension that are more prevalent and that need remedial help and enrichment in order to help employees of the nationalized bank

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis was formulated:

There is no significant level of stress among employees who scored around or lower than 139 score on occupational stress index. (Table1: Norms in Judging Occupational Stress)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study used descriptive as well as analytical method to determine the significant level of stress among the bank employees of nationalized bank.

SAMPLE

Non-probability purposive sampling has been done. The study was conducted in five branches of Punjab national bank located in Luckow was taken. The areas under study were Hazratganj, Jankipuram, Telibagh, Aishbagh, and Gomti Nagar. Around 200 employees of the banks were interviewed in the process of data collection.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The Occupational Stress Index (Srivastava, A.K., and Singh, A.P., 1981) was used for data collection. The scale consists of 46 items, each to be rated on the five point scale. Out of 46 items 28 are 'True – Keyed' and last 18 are 'False – Keyed'. The items such as, role over-load, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure, responsibility for persons, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic, impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability was contained in the questionnaire. These items are considered as potential stressors at individual level.

Table 1 NORMS IN JUDGING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Sn	Variable	Occupational stress level		
		Low	Medium	High
1	Role Overload	6-14	15-22	23-30
2	Role Ambiguity	4-9	10-12	13-20
3	Role Conflict	5-12	13-17	18-25
4	Unreasonable Group/Political Pressures	4-9	10-14	15-20
5	Responsibility for Persons	3-7	8-11	12-15
6	Under participation	4-9	10-12	13-20
7	Powerlessness	3-7	8-11	12-15
8	Poor Peer Relation	4-8	9-13	14-20
9	Intrinsic Impoverishment	4-9	10-13	14-20
10	Low Status	3-6	7-11	12-15
11	Strenuous Working Conditions	4-9	10-12	13-20
12	Unprofitability	2-4	5-7	8-10
	Total score	46-122	123-155	156-230

Source: A. K. Srivastava and A. P. Singh, 'The manual of Occupational stress index', Manovaigyanic Parikshan Sansthan, Varanasi, 1984

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table - 2 Items of Various Sub-Scales of O.S.I.

No.	Sub Scales (Occupational Stress)	Serial No. of the Items in the Schedule
1	Role Overload	1,13,25,36,44,46
2	Role Ambiguity	2,14*,26,37
3	Role Conflict	3,15*,27,38*,45
4	Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure	4,16,28,39
5	Responsibility for persons	5,17,29
6	Under-participation	6*,18*,30*,40*
7	Powerlessness	7*,19*,31*
8	Poor-Peer Relations	8*,20*,32*,41*
9	Intrinsic Impoverishment	9,21*,33*,42*
10	Low Status	10*,22*,34
11	Strenuous Working condition	12,24,35,43*
12	Unprofitability	11,23

Note: * False Keyed Item

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The results obtained from 20 subjects on occupational stress on 12 subscales of O.S.I were analysed using descriptive statistics. In the present study effect of occupational stress was investigated. The descriptive statistics is given in Table 3(given below).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics

Sr. No.	Sub Scales	Codes	Percentage
1	Role Overload	RO	49.16
2	Role Ambiguity	RA	68.75
3	Role Conflict	RC	56.8
4	Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure	UGPP	76.25
5	Responsibility for persons	RP	64
6	Under-participation	UP	55
7	Powerlessness	PL	71
8	Poor-Peer Relations	PPR	79.75
9	Intrinsic Impoverishment	II	61.5
10	Low Status	LS	71
11	Strenuous Working condition	SWC	59.25
12	Unprofitability	UF	50

Hypothesis H_0 : There are no signs of presence of stress among employees of bank under study on the various dimensions of Occupational Stress Index

$H_0: u \leq 139$

H1: $u > 139$

Table – 4 Level of Stress among Nationalized bank Employees.

	Mean	S.D.	Calculated t value	Tabulated t value @ 0.01 Level of Significance and 11 d.f.
OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	250.08	61.15	6.618	2.718

Since tabulated value < calculated value

Null hypothesis rejected.

There is a significant level of stress among employees who scored around or lower than 139 score on occupational stress index.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the present study shows that there is a significant level of stress among the employees on each dimension of the occupational stress index .The null hypothesis gets rejected therefore an alternate hypothesis was accepted i.e., on an average if the score is above 139 ,then there is a significant level of stress at individual level among the bank employees therefore an instant and remedial help should be given to employees so that they can cope with the stress and thereafter give their best which in turn helps the organization to yield more and grow more.

The various dimensions were given weightage according to their prevalence in order to know which component is adversely affecting the employees. The result showed that on an average, the employees scored high on items such as poor peer relation followed by unreasonable group and political pressure followed by powerlessness and low status. It can be then concluded that employees is highly stressed due to lack of cooperation, poor communication and interpersonal relation among themselves furthermore, conflicts related to following the rules and regulations for job performance under the pressure or influence of certain group and the feeling of unworthiness and less involvement of the employees in decision making is also the cause of stress.

However in all other aspects, the employees have scored medium.ie; the other items are also playing roles in adding stress to the employees

CONCLUSION

The fact and findings suggest that stress is present and affecting employees at the individual level, certain steps should be taken from the side of organization as well as from individual itself to procure the effects of stress .Since the stress was high on the dimension of poor peer relation , unreasonable group and political pressure, powerlessness and low status, management is required

to plan certain strategies such as group activities, involvement of employees in decision making wherever necessary, job enrichment and more supportive, friendly and clean environment etc. to deal with the stress. From the part of individual, they should indulge in physical exercises, do ice breaking activities among themselves, be optimistic and make a to-do list. The productivity of the work force is the most decisive factor as far as the success of an organization is concerned. Therefore such factors that can affect the productivity should be identified and initiatives should be taken in helping the employees to overcome its disastrous effect.

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