

JOB STRESS IN BANK EMPLOYEES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract Stress is a state of being involving demand on physical or mental energy. Stressors may consist of various stimuli in the environment, such as the climate or social conditions. Stress is a subjective experience and hence the cause of stress may differ from person to person or from occupation to occupation. This study aims at identifying the factors causing job stress in Bank employees. A sample of 200 employees of private and public sector banks have been surveyed. Sample was distributed equally among private and public sector banks and 50 male and 50 female respondents from each sector respectively were considered. The study assessed job stress using dichotomy and a comparison was drawn on factors attributed to job stress between private and public sector banks and also the difference between male and female gender. Stratified Random sampling technique was used for collection of data. Maximum probable score and chi square techniques were used to analyze the data. Based on the analysis and interpretation, the article was summarized and concluded.

Keywords: Stressors, Dichotomy, Maximum Possible Score.

The Encyclopedia of stress Flick (2000) defines stress as “real or interpreted threat to physiological or psychological integrity of an individual that results in physiological and/or behavioral response.” In other words, stress is the response of the body to the challenging events that cause distress to an individual. The term stress has been derived from the Latin word “stringer” which means to draw tight. “Father of Stress”, Hans Selye, suggested that a stressor was anything that causes the stress response. Work stress is defined by Beeher and Newman (1978) as “a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning.” There is a change in perception of the effects of stress on an individual. Stress is therefore multi-dimensional and depends upon whether the one sees it as a problem or as a solution. Stress has become a common phenomenon of our daily life. Globalization has presented the managers and employees of organizations with many challenges. Some of the key ones include the ability to work better with limited resources, accepting mobility, and the ability to cope up with stress levels. Researchers on medical science have identified three components that cause stress. These are job and organization, social sector, and intra-psychic sector. With life gaining momentum with the advance of technology, work stress is increasing. Employees can no longer afford to relax in a business environment. Kwok Sai Wong et al. (2005) said that emotional support was shown to be effective in buffering the impacts of job-related stress.

According to researchers like Ivancivich (2001) and Hebard (1996), amongst all other required skills like overseas experience and knowledge of specific areas, international managers need to be well versed in the skill of stress management. Short-term irregularities and stress are found to arise in the context of relationships’ long-term continuity and stability (João F. Proença, & Luís M. de Castro, 2005).

Stress can be the essence of working life, and certainly need not always be damaging to us. But when it becomes excessive, it is something unwanted. Judith A. Waters et al. (2007) documented symptoms of stress that include digestive disorders, cardiovascular disease, alcoholism, domestic violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and suicide. Salespeople operating in the banking industry are prone to be dissatisfied, emotionally exhausted, and are likely to quit when they believe that their time or their effort have been wasted or used ineffectively (Fernando Jaramillo et al., (2006). Hanafiah Haji Hasan’s (2007) study observed that job satisfaction and job-related stress were significantly related to the intention of leaving the job. Only people who are have a good pay, or job position, or high education were found to have job satisfaction. Elements of motivators and elements of hygiene were related to job satisfaction and job related stress respectively.

A number of factors are held responsible in the study of stress. These is the multi-dimensionality of the subject, the definition of stress, its direct relationship with the changing behavior of individuals and the increasing negative effects

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Table 1: Sector-wise Stress Causing Factors

Factors	Public Sector		Private Sector	
	Total Score	% to MPS	Total Score	% to MPS
Lack of open communication channel among the staff	132	33	126	32
Lack of departmental debrief session on a consistent basis	145	36	143	36
Lack of proper description of roles and task assignments of employee	107	27	124	31
Woes , if any, not heard and responded on time by the superiors	135	34	165	41
Lack of clear, well conducted grievance cell in the organization	122	31	172	43
Lack of availability of suggestion box that can be opened before a debrief session	126	32	184	46
Lack of Medical leave and it's effectiveness	106	27	154	39
Lack of compensatory off and it's effectiveness	125	31	188	47
Lack of transparency in solving issues	153	38	164	41
Lack of well organized system of promotion policy	107	27	135	44
Unsupportive work culture	105	26	142	36
Increased stress levels due to job rotation	190	48	185	46
Yearly appraisal system contribute to increased stress levels	181	45	178	45
Increased work load felt even after introduction of technology	190	48	189	47
Lack of support and understanding of family members about job and timings	118	30	121	30
Inability to eat at least one meal a day with family members	115	29	110	28
Increased stress felt when dealing with customers	173	43	154	39
Increased stress felt when dealing with colleagues	159	40	148	37
Increased stress felt when involved in administration work	154	39	174	44
Need to hit target/headlines	165	41	187	47
Long working hours	176	44	179	45

of stress on productivity. This paper aims to assess stress from the work perspective and also look at the difference in the stress levels in both public and private sectors.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To find the factors that cause work related stress to public and private bank employees.
2. To find the factors that cause work related stress to male and female bank employees

METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire was designed to collect the primary data and was distributed to 200 respondents of public and private sector banks located in Visakhapatnam City, of which 50 female and 50 male respondents from private sector and 50 female and 50 male respondents from public sector respectively were considered and analyzed using Stratified Random sampling technique. In order to analyze the order of stress causing factors, Maximum Probable Score

was calculated. Further, chi square distribution was used to know whether there was any significant difference in factors which cause stress between private and public sector banks and also factors which cause stress between male and female respondents in both private and public bank sectors.

LIMITATIONS

1. The responses could be biased based on the employee-manager relationship or employee-peer group relationship.
2. The time of collection of data was during the peak of mid-day summer working hours. This is a major stress causing factor by itself as many of the offices are either not air conditioned or were suffering from severe power cuts.
3. Statistical errors are possible even though utmost care has been taken to avoid any error.
4. The data were collected only from respondents of public and private sector banks working in Visakhapatnam city and hence the conclusions cannot be generalized.
5. The age of the respondents vary from 20 to 60; the

marital status, qualifications, and the designation also vary from one respondent to another. On account of these constraints, it has to be said once again that the results cannot be generalized.

FINDINGS

Stress causing factors to employees differ from sector to sector. Factors causing stress to public and private sector employees were identified and are shown in Table 1.

It was found that majority (48 percent to MPS each) of the employees of public sector banks had a feeling that job rotation and increased work load even after introduction of technology are causing more stress. The second factor which was causing more stress was yearly appraisal system with 45 percent to MPS, followed by long working hours (44 percent to MPS). Among all the factors, unsupportive work culture, and lack of well organized system of promotion policy were the least stress causing factors with 26 percent to MPS and 27 percent to MPS respectively.

In case of private sectors, it was found that need to hit the targets, increased work load even after introduction

of technology, and lack of compensatory off and it's effectiveness were the major stress causing factors, which stood first with 47 percent to MPS each. The factors such as job rotation and lack of availability of suggestion box to be opened before a debrief session stood second as the major stress causing factors with 46 percent to MPS. Eating at least one meal a day with your family members and lack of support and understanding of family members about job and timings were the least stress causing factors. It was also found that there are no significant differences between public and private sector employees.

Various stress causing factors for male and female employees were shown in Table 2. Increased work load felt even after introduction of technology was the factor causing more stress to the female employees (49 percent to MPS), followed by job rotation (47 percent to MPS), and long working hours (47 percent to MPS). Lack of proper description of roles and task assignments of employee was the least stress causing factor for females (28 percent to MPS).

Job rotation was the major stress causing factor for male employees and it stood first with a score of 186 (47 percent to MPS). The second factor was increased work load that

Table 2: Gender-wise Stress Causing Factors

Factors	Female		Male	
	Total score	% to MPS	Total score	% to MPS
Lack of open communication channel among the staff	132	33	126	32
Lack of departmental debrief session on a consistent basis	145	36	143	36
Lack of proper description of roles and task assignments of employee	113	28	118	30
Woes , if any, not heard and responded timely by the superiors	153	38	147	37
Lack of clear, well conducted grievance cell in the organization	139	35	143	36
Lack of availability of suggestion box that can be opened before a debrief session	146	37	164	41
Lack of Medical leave and it's effectiveness	127	32	133	33
Lack of compensatory off and it's effectiveness	148	37	165	41
Lack of transparency in solving issues	159	40	158	40
Lack of well organized system of promotion policy	128	32	114	29
Un-supportive work culture	127	32	120	30
Increased stress levels due to job rotation	189	47	186	47
Yearly appraisal system contribute to increased stress levels	185	46	174	44
Increased work load felt even after introduction of technology	194	49	185	46
Lack of support and understanding of family members about job and timings	126	32	109	27
Inability to eat at least one meal a day with family members	126	32	109	27
Increased stress felt when dealing with customers	171	43	156	39
Increased stress felt when dealing with colleagues	151	38	156	39
Increased stress felt when involved in administration work	174	44	154	39
Need to hit target/headlines	183	46	169	42
Long working hours	187	47	168	42

is felt even after introduction of technology (46 percent to MPS), followed by yearly appraisal system that contribute to increased stress levels (44 percent to MPS), need to hit the target/headlines (42 percent to MPS), and long working hours (42 percent to MPS). Lack of support and understanding of family members about job and timings, and inability to eat at least one meal a day with family members were the two factors causing least stress to male employees with 27 percent to MPS each. It was found that there was a significant difference between male and female employees.

Table 3 shows the various stress releasing factors such as: regular staff get together in the organization, daily physical exercise, training programs and skill building exertion held on regular consistent basis, myself stress handling situations, and stress handling situations by others for public and private sector.

It was found from Table 3 that stress handling situations by self was the major stress relieving factor in public sector followed by daily physical exertion and regular staff gets together in the organization. The major stress relieving factor in case of private sector was found to be daily physical exertion. The second stress relieving factor was stress handling situations by him.

The major stress relieving factor for female employees was training programs and skill building exercises held on a regular consistent basis and stress handling situations by self. The same was observed for male employees as well.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be inferred that job related stress is causing lots of difficulties in an individual and is leading to many problems at a personal, organizational, familial, and communal levels. Though technology has been incorporated and updated from time to time for making work easier and faster, it has not lead to reduction in stress levels of a person.

Bart Cambre et al. (2012) said that human resources managers should focus more on structural differences and organizational choices that may affect job design and work systems. Very often, it is also evident that a work-life balance is sought by employees. It is observed from the study that the factors causing job related stress are many. It can be seen that some of these factors are those which can be easily overcome by the banks like having a debrief session on a consistent basis, having a staff get together and maintaining a supportive work culture well-being of persons working in both private and public sectors. And from an individual's perspective, the stress causing factors that can be overcome include maintaining a regular fitness regime by doing exercises on a regular basis and also by eating at least one meal with the family a day. However, for a holistic and long standing approach, introducing organizational counseling to find out the causes and planning strategies to overcome the same is suggested. One can conclude by mentioning that a 24/7 ever evolving work atmosphere and advent of technology and increasing boundaries are

Table 3: Sector-wise Stress Relieving Factors

Relieving Factors	Public Sector		Private Sector	
	Total Score	% to MPS	Total Score	% to MPS
Regular staff get together in the organization	162	41	156	39
Daily physical exertion (Like exercise, yoga, walking etc.)	171	43	178	45
Training programs and skill building exercises held on a regular consistent basis	136	34	156	39
Stress handling situations by self	174	44	174	44
Stress handling situations with the help of others (friends, family etc.)	158	40	161	40

Table 4: Gender-wise Stress Relieving Factors

Relieving Factors	Female		Male	
	Total score	% to MPS	Total score	% to MPS
Regular staff get together in the organization	161	40	157	39
Daily physical exertion (Like exercise, yoga, walking etc.)	138	35	154	39
Training programs and skill building exercises held on a regular consistent basis	172	43	177	44
Stress handling situations by self	172	43	176	44
Stress handling situations with help of others (friends, family etc.)	156	39	163	41

bringing people closer to work. However, the demands on individuals are ever increasing and causing work related stress. So, there is much scope for further study in this. For enhanced productivity levels and contended, healthy workforce, identifying and overcoming job related stress becomes inevitable.

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