

## Research Article

### Manifestation of Workplace Stressors among Banking Personnel

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**Abstract:** Stress is the physiological or psychological imbalance among the individuals when they find a disparity between a situational demand and their ability. Traditionally, management has taken the problem of stress as the workers' personal problem and the management also blamed the workers that they are not fitting themselves into the working environment. But, now-a-days, the management analyses the job requirements and the social relationships as the prime indicators of stress. With the advent of the technological inventions, the nature of job is deskilled and the worker is totally disconnected from the end product. This paved way for the high degree of boredom and decreased scope for improvisation. The objective of this study is to analyze the impact of socio-economic factors influencing the level of stress among the employees in State Bank of India, Tiruchirapalli. Random sampling method is used to collect the primary data from 150 employees of branches of State Bank of India in Tiruchirapalli district by administering a questionnaire. SPSS package is used to analyse the data collected with the help of ANOVA single factor and Weighted ANOVA. The results show that age and educational qualification, gender marital status and annual income do not influence the level of occupational stress. The increased level of stress for experienced respondents is due to the job hierarchy and extended responsibilities in the job. They stressed because of their expectation in the career elevation and incapacity to cope up with the innovation in the technologies. The respondents feel that they can manage in acquiring skill and knowledge to cope up with the job requirements and expectations.

**Keywords:** Inter role distance, personal inadequacy, personal psychology, role expectation conflict and promotional policies, role overload, stress

## INTRODUCTION

In this fast changing technological and business environment, every individual is exposed to stress both in the family and occupation. Stress is the physiological or psychological imbalance among the individuals when they find a disparity between a situational demand and their ability. Stress may be positive or negative. When an opportunity is given to an individual for his betterment, the stress is considered as positive stress. When a person feels that he is not able to cope up with the situation, negative stress emerges and results in social, physical organizational and emotional problems. According to Scott (2006) stressors at workplace include unclear requirement, role overload, high stress times with no down times, big consequences for small failures, lack of personal control, lack of recognition, poor leadership. Vivek and Janakiraman (2013) have revealed that the modernization of banking services has made the employees more likely to be stressful. Occupational stress spreads gradually and continuously over time, sending people into downward spiral from where it is hard to recover. The banking industry is undergoing a lot of radical and restructuring

policy changes has posted a total revamping of their service to customers. To compete with the cut through competition with other banks, employees were indirectly forced to manage issues. These transformational changes have caused stress under psychological, economical and social dimensions. Stress at workplace is identified as one the threat for providing a joyful working environment for employees. Banking industry has recognised that climate of work stress allied with decrease in performance issues, low morale, less motivation and empowerment, ineffective services to customer, more conflicts, etc. Thus, the present study is focusing on the possible stress issues at work place in banks.

**Need and objective of the study:** Occupational stress results in much of health perils and faced by many people in their workplace irrespective of the occupation. The employees are likely to be unhealthy, less motivated and with high absenteeism. They are likely to be less competitive with low productivity. As work forms part of a life of an employee, rewarding his work will make highly motivated and feel satisfied. When an employee feels that his work does not provide

an opportunity to make use of his creativity, intellect and decisive power, he will have stress in his mind. Traditionally, management has taken the problem of stress as the workers' personal problem and the management also blamed the workers that they are not fitting themselves into the working environment. But, now-a-days, the management analyses the job requirements and the social relationships as the prime indicators of stress. With the advent of the technological inventions, the nature of job is deskilled and the worker is totally disconnected from the end product. This paved way for the high degree of boredom and decreased scope for improvisation. Thus, stress is often faced as a challenge which may be positive eustress or as an impediment distress. The eustress results in a positive and competitive environment and distress leads to negative impacts which should be managed by the top level carefully. The objective of this study is to analyse the impact of socio-economic factors influencing the level of stress among the employees in State Bank of India, Tiruchirapalli.

**Scope of the study:** State Bank of India (SBI) ranks as 67<sup>th</sup> in the list of largest banks in the world based on market capitalization as of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014. It has a market capitalization of US\$24.008 billion as on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014 with the symbol as NSE: SBIN. There are 228,296 employees in SBI as on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2013. SBI has 17,000 branches including 190 foreign offices and assets worth of US\$388 billion as on December 2013. As on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014, SBI has 43,515 ATMs and the staff productivity per employee is INR 944 Lakhs to revenues and INR 6.45 Lakhs to profit as per SBI Annual Report for the year 2012-13. The world's leading provider of global business information, knowledge and insight, Dun and Bradstreet (D&B), announced "Dun & Bradstreet-Polaris Financial Technology Awards 2013" in Mumbai and declared SBI as the Best Public Sector Bank. State Bank of India has won three IDRBT (Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology) Banking Technology awards 2013 for "Electronic Payment Systems", "Best use of technology for financial inclusion" and "Customer Management and Business Intelligence" on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2013 at Hyderabad. The achievements are possible because of the participation of the employees as a team and aiming at the customer satisfaction.

**Sampling design and tools used:** Random sampling method is used to collect the primary data from 150 employees of branches of State Bank of India in Tiruchirapalli district by administering a questionnaire. Of the total questionnaires distributed, 139 are found complete with a response rate of 92.67%. The Cronbach alpha for the internal consistency is 0.867 which is considered to be good. SPSS package is used to analyze the data collected with the help of ANOVA single factor and Weighted ANOVA.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Michailidis and Georgiou (2005) have stated that the occupational stress among bank employees is influenced by their educational background. Their exposure while learning has made either positive or negative impact while dealing with stress in the workplace. A study conducted in Jammu region (Sharma *et al.*, 2012) also have confirmed that age, education, salary, appreciation and rewards influence the level of stress among the bank employees. Rajendran (2010) has revealed that majority of bank employees in Chennai face severe stress-related ailments and psychological problems. A research done by Anderson *et al.* (2002) opined that interpersonal conflicts within workplace have made a degree of negative impacts in personal and family life. The presence of stressors (Scott, 2006), at work place include unclear requirement, role overload, high stress times with no down times, big consequences for small failures, lack of personal control, lack of recognition, poor leadership. Vishal *et al.* (2013) have pinpointed that the existence of intensive competition in banking industry has made the employees to feel high level of stress while dealing with customers. Usman and Muhammad (2010) have also supported that there exists a negative relationship between job stress and job performance among bank employees in Pakistan.

A study done by Shah (2003) has identified that the bank employees in Kashmir experience medium to high level of stress at work with the role stagnation, inadequacy of role authority and role erosion as the major stressors. But in contrary, Catherine (2013) examined the influence of joint and independent predictions of emotional intelligence, perceived leadership style and job characteristics on occupational stress among bank workers in South East, Nigeria. The experience of workplace stress also depends on the way the person makes sense and perceives of their work environment. It also depends on the physical environment and facilities available for conducting the assigned job. Researchers have noted that unfavourable factors such as poor telecommunication networks, low skill levels and educational attainment of staff, hostile governmental policies and world events, all combine to create a very different business environment to comparable banking organizations in more highly industrialized countries (Mahdi and Dawson, 2007).

Bhattacharya and Basu (2007) in the article "Distress, Wellness and organizational Role Stress among IT Professionals: Role of Life Events and Coping Resources", attempted to explain the effect of sex and age as well as the predictability of the variables from stressful life events. Results of the study revealed that women experienced greater wellness and older personnel experienced more distress. Researchers have noted that the socio-physical environment is burdened with occupational stress indicators (Akingbola and Adigun, 2010). Especially exposed to high occupational stress are commercial bank workers in Nigeria who

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of respondents

Age (years)	Number	Total (%)	Annual income (₹)	Number	Total (%)
<35	25	18	<3 Lakhs	25	18
35-45	11	8	3-4 Lakhs	20	14
45-55	54	39	4-5 Lakhs	52	37
>55	49	35	>5 Lakhs	42	30
Total	139	100	Total	139	100
Gender	Number	Total (%)	Marital status	Number	Total (%)
Male	89	64	Married	116	84
Female	50	36	Unmarried	23	16
Total	139	100	Total	139	100
Education	Number	Total (%)	Experience	Number	Total (%)
UG	84	60.00	<5 years	29	21
PG	44	32.00	5-15 years	15	11
Others	11	8.00	>15 years	95	68
Total	139	100.00	Total	139	100

Primary data

Table 2: Impact of age and educational qualification on the level of stress

Factors	Age		Educational qualification	
	p value	Result	p value	Result
Personality and personal psychology	0.672	Accepted	0.009	Rejected
Inter role distance	0.114	Accepted	0.001	Rejected
Role expectation conflict	0.299	Accepted	0.322	Accepted
Role overload	0.133	Accepted	0.275	Accepted
Personal inadequacy	0.746	Accepted	0.197	Accepted
Promotion policies and career growth	0.146	Accepted	0.256	Accepted
Overall opinion	0.308	Accepted	0.491	Accepted

Primary data (at 5% level of significance)

must contend with a host of precipitating factors, such as, excessive and unpredictable work schedule occasioned by an ever increasing competition in the industry; a virtual disappearance of job security as evident in mass retrenchment of thousands of bank workers on a regular basis; low decision latitude on the job; and increasing threats to physical safety, security and well-being as banks have become the number one target of armed robbery attacks, kidnappings and armed raids by bandits.

Excessive amount of stress can also cause physical and emotional problems (Pflanz and Ogle, 2006) and poor life satisfaction (Pawar and Rathod, 2007). Showkat (2013) pinpointed that stress causes various psychological problems like anger, depression, anxiety, irritability and tension and this influences the motivation of employees to a considerable extent. Enough research has not been done in the context of banking industry, because of certain peculiar features, like tight worship schedule, work load etc., the changing working scenario of banking industry, due to the sizeable increase in volume of banking business, competitive environment created due entry of new private sector and foreign banks, has increased the risk of stress among the employees worship this industry.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The primary data collected were analyzed and depicted in the Table 1 and 2. Table 1 shows nearly three-fourth of the respondents were above 45 years. Sixty seven percent of the respondents earn more than 4 Lakhs/annum. Of the total respondents, 64% were male and 36% were female. Eighty four percent were

married and the rest were unmarried. Three-fifths of the respondents were under graduate degree holders, 32% were post graduate degree holders and rest belongs to other diploma degree holders. Sixty eight percent of the respondents have more than 15 years of experience.

Personality and personal psychology includes the factors which influences the mental behavior of the bank employees. They reveal that they do not like arguments against them and hate others while they disturb their busy work. They also become upset when others engage in immoral behavior in front of them. They also feel anxious during the leisure time and discontented with their present accomplishment. They want to improve their performance constantly. They also hesitate to express their feeling in their work place. Inter role distance reveals role of the bank employees in the work place and at home. They opined that their nature of work does not allow them to spend time with their family as they carry official work to home. They are also of the opinion that overtime has become the regular phenomenon and they do not find time to satisfy the other social and religious interests. They reveal that their role in the bank interfere their family and they try to balance their work by doing double work simultaneously. As a result, their family harmony gets disturbed because of misunderstanding of their official role by the family members.

Role expectation conflict means the expectations of the peers from the employees to help in their work. The employees may feel difficult in balancing the conflicting demands from the seniors and juniors. As the co-workers' absence leads to excessive workload

Table 3: Impact of gender and marital status on the level of stress

Factors	Gender		Marital status	
	p value	Result	p value	Result
Personality and personal psychology	0.313	Accepted	0.009	Rejected
Inter role distance	0.982	Accepted	0.021	Rejected
Role expectation conflict	0.191	Accepted	0.384	Accepted
Role overload	0.472	Accepted	0.046	Rejected
Personal inadequacy	0.197	Accepted	0.097	Accepted
Promotion policies and career growth	0.201	Accepted	0.186	Accepted
Overall opinion	0.192	Accepted	0.133	Accepted

Primary data (at 5% level of significance)

and the over expectation of the peers from the employee result in frustration and irritation in their minds. They feel that the peers try to exploit their knowledge and skill. They are also of the opinion that there is no sufficient time to relax the situation and time to meet their personal needs. Role overload depicts the excessive demand placed on the employees to complete the work. They feel depressed and find insufficient time to finish the personal work. This overload result in the sacrifice of quality in work and this induces frustration in their minds.

Personal inadequacy means the inadequate knowledge and skill of the employees to do the work. They also feel shy to improve themselves and clear their doubts. They also feel inferior before their peers. This result in annoyance in their mind set. They are of the opinion that they should be improved and get themselves updated with the technological up gradation. Promotion policies and career growth includes the opinion of the employees regarding their existing competition in the career growth. They feel that they have to compete with the ambitious, energetic and technically qualified younger colleagues. They also feel tensed while their performance is watched by their seniors and frustrated while the performance is not properly evaluated. At times they believe that there is little scope for further advancement in career and they are stagnated in their place. They are also of the opinion that the management should modify the promotion policy of the employees.

**Ho: Age and educational qualification do not influence the level of stress among the bank employees:** Table 2 shows that age and educational qualification do not influence the level of stress among the bank employees. Irrespective of age, the respondents are able to manage their level of stress in the work place. They are in a position to manage the mental status and the interrelationship with others. The experience gained by the respondents and the degree of mental strength at the younger age have made them to balance the stress at workplace and the family commitments. Michailidis and Georgiou (2005) have studied occupational stress among employees in banking sector and found that educational levels affect the degree of stress as they face the variety in work,

delegation, nepotism and inconsistent jobs. In this study, regarding the educational qualification, the respondents do feel that the personality and psychology level are influenced by the knowledge gained by them.

**Ho: Gender and marital status do not influence the level of stress among the bank employees:** Table 3 shows that gender and marital status do not influence the level of stress among the bank employees. Irrespective of the gender, the respondents are able to manage the level of stress in the job. As they are of same educational qualification and age group, they do not find any significant difference in handling the job. Nagina (2009) has said that the work/family conflict and increased stress makes the professional married women to defend against the remunerated work and family accountability. She also says that it is intricate for the married working women to incorporate their multiform commitments of profession, family circle, spouse and offspring. But, in case of marital status is concerned, they find a difference in the level of occupational stress. As the married women have to balance between domestic and official responsibilities, they feel stressed with regard to overloading of load, personal psychological and inter role distance to be maintained. The married women may feel guilty of non-fulfillment of domestic responsibilities when there is over load in the office. This will result in psychological and health problems. However, they manage to cope up with the stress and compete with the men folk in the organization.

**Ho: Experience and monthly income do not influence the level of stress among the bank employees:** Mariya and Tahira (2012) have said that level of occupational stress is influenced by the experience of the employees (Table 4). They revealed that people with high experience face high level of stress and vice versa. Sakshi and Rajvir (2013) have opined that employees in insurance sector having higher experience face higher level of occupational stress. In this study, the increased level of stress for experienced respondents is due to the job hierarchy and extended responsibilities in the job. They stressed because of their expectation in the career elevation and incapacity to cope up with the innovation in the

Table 4: Impact of experience and monthly income on the level of stress

Factors	Experience		Annual income	
	p value	Result	p value	Result
Personality and personal psychology	0.059	Accepted	0.849	Accepted
Inter role distance	0.000	Rejected	0.104	Accepted
Role expectation conflict	0.202	Accepted	0.619	Accepted
Role overload	0.002	Rejected	0.062	Accepted
Personal inadequacy	0.004	Rejected	0.082	Accepted
Promotion policies and career growth	0.002	Rejected	0.285	Accepted
Overall opinion	0.000	Rejected	0.132	Accepted

Primary data (at 5% level of significance)

Table 5: Ranking of factors influencing stress by bank employees-weighted ANOVA

Factors	Weighted ANOVA	Rank
Personality and personal psychology	71.83333	1
Promotion policies and career growth	70.73810	2
Role overload	67.97619	3
Role expectation conflict	67.19048	4
Personal inadequacy	66.78571	5
Inter role distance	55.42857	6

Primary data

technologies. Because of their role overload, they have to work for overtime and this reduces their personal time spending with the family. Ayyappan and SakthiVadivel (2013) have opined that the technological growth and global competition in the banking sector has made the bank employees to face the occupational stress. Vijit (2011) has said that the employees with different income level do have same level of occupational stress. The respondents who are in the different income levels face proportionate level of stress and they have opined that they do not feel that income level is much influencing factor in determining the level of occupational stress. Irrespective of the income level, the respondents feel that the occupational stress exists in their minds.

Table 5 clearly indicates the ranking of factors influencing the occupational stress among the bank employees. They rank the personality and personal psychology as first because it affects the mental behavior in the work place. As they most of their time in the work place, they want to have a balanced state of mind while performing the work. Promotion policies and career growth is ranked as second because they are very much interested in their career up gradation which forms the basis for their future life. The role overload is ranked as third, as they face the overloading of work and extended working time daily in their life which they find difficult to manage. Fourthly, they find the role expectation conflict as the stressor, as they face difficulty in moving with their peers and seniors. They also feel that a small difference of opinion with the people at the work place will affect their career. Personal inadequacy is ranked as five, as they can manage in acquiring skill and knowledge to cope up with the job requirements and expectations. Inter role distance is given the last rank because they are of the opinion they can balance their family and work with the help of elders in the family, participation of spouse in

the family work, relaxing themselves in the recreational activities and the like.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The respondents should follow three common coping strategies, namely, proactive coping, social coping and meaning focused coping. Proactive coping deals with proper foreseeing of impediments to be faced and the challenges to be met with appropriate planning and analytical mind. Social coping relates to seeking mental and personal support from the family members, peer group, subordinates and the top management. Meaning focused coping deals with learning through experience in stressful circumstances. In order to soothe the stress, the respondents may adopt yoga meditation; relax with family members and recreational activities. If possible, they can avail counseling from their elder family members and professionals. The respondents must understand the home and work boundaries. The respondents should avoid catastrophizing, generalizing and wrongfully projecting the situation. The respondents should be active, take healthy food and avoid unhealthy competition. Thus, they must understand to strike a balance between work and personal life and wish to achieve a peaceful and successful official and personal endeavours.

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