

Research Article

A Study on EU Stress Strategy at Workplace in Banking Sector

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Abstract: In recent times, the business milieu has become aggressive by vibrant customers with myriad expectations. Thereby, the responses to those environments are also chaotic. The roles and responsibilities of employees are sky-scraping. The role clarity, role distance, role stagnation and role erosion are quite common while meeting the demands of customers. The unsecured job stretched working hour, internal competition and indefinite task demand may cause serious psychological stress issues at work place. This stress will go up to the range of even affecting quality of work and personal life. Though there seems to be many researches in the stress perspective, the studies related to banking employees are limited. On the other hand, banking sector is one among the customer centric sector escalating swiftly, to the boom of getting employees affected. The present study aims on the need to study and gives solutions in order to track with business environment. Hence, this study focuses on the causes and effects of stress among the employees of nationalized banks in Thanjavur District.

Keywords: Bank employees, banking sector, Eu stress, nationalized banks, stress management, Tanjore

INTRODUCTION

At present, the banking sector too is entitled with the equal workload similar to other technological industries, as a result of the reforms undergone in the past two decades in banking sector. This study was exclusively done in nationalized bank where we see extended workforce involved in a prominent work environment and the workforce is likely to have more work pressure and stress. Common sources of stress in the banking sector include a continual process of change and restructure, economic climate and conditions (Bunn *et al.*, 2013). This study reviews on motivating elements of work place stress, effects of stress (Eu stress and distress), both physical and emotional upshots due to stress and also methods to which the employees themselves cope up with their work stress. Hence, the present study focuses on the level of work stress and its nature and its effect on employee's performance of the nationalized banks in Thanjavur District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, stress means to an emotional experience related with nervousness, tension and strain (cf. Cooke and Rousseau, 1984). The literature on stress explained a different viewpoints to it concepts, its causes and its effects. Stressors can be understood as "stimuli that evoke the stress process" (LePine *et al.*, 2005). Employees facing different stressors may vary with the

result of their work experiences (Parker and De Cottiis, 1983). Relationships at work with superiors, colleagues and subordinates have been identified as potential stressors (Adunola and Patrick, 2012). Studies have found that stressors of co-workers is related to high role ambiguity, poor communication, low job satisfaction, poor psychological well being (Danna and Griffin, 1999). Nadeem (2011) pointed out that the employee and organization both may have effects due to stress. Compared to public sector banks, employees of private banks facing more job stress (Katyal *et al.*, 2011). When comparing to nationalized bank employees, non nationalized bank employees more neurotic.

Neelamegam and Asrafi (2010) opined that the word stress that applied in the life as a pressure. In many jobs, stress can be manageable but mostly it is unavoidable. Mujtaba *et al.* (2010) proposed that in an economic slowdown, stress is an increasing factor among working adults. Their suggestions help to overcome the stress in working place and also in personal life. Each and everyone experienced the stress that applied in the life as a pressure. Mohsan *et al.* (2011) concluded that in the past few years, stress is an increasing issue in working environment. Under high level of stress, role ambiguity, overload of work, lacks in feedback, conflicts and technological changes may happen in unstable corporate environment. They analyzed how stress affects the performance of job of employees working in the banks in Pakistan. They found that the significant and negative correlation of stress with job performance. As a result, they suggested

that the banking sector should employ the effective stress management practices such as supportive work culture to increase the satisfaction and whole job performance of bank employees. According to a study conducted by Cheng (2009), the top level employees experience more stress, attached towards pay and decreased job satisfaction ends with indifferent attitude towards their job. According to Sutherland and Cooper (2000), sources of stress in the workplace need to be examined along with home-work balance. Varying nature of family structures, employing women in the workforce and technological changes that has affected the employees paired role in work and home leads to conflict at work place (Cooper *et al.*, 2001).

Carver *et al.* (2008) viewed stress as occurring when people find constraints to their objectives and they view coping with stress as a strategy to provide a positive environment to achieve their goals. Arti *et al.* (2012) has conducted a study intend to identify the coping strategies adopted for managing role stress at commercial banks. Tidd and Friedman (2002) pointed out that individuals may adopt positive attitude for reducing the negative impact of role conflict in their work place. Riolli and Savicki (2003) stated that the Eu stress will lead to positive mental attitude which will in turn helps employees to achieve personal goals. The structural change pattern of banking industry in India has posted different to the high stress perception amongst employees (Rajeshwari, 1992), which makes it pertinent to identify ways and means for coping with stress at work. Supporting Siders *et al.* (2001), we found that the affective commitment of employees to their organization was positively associated with employee performance. Employees with higher levels of affective commitment and higher levels of job experience channeled felt stress more effectively into their work performance.

Objectives of the study: As stated in the review of literature, the increasing level of stress in workplace has made the researcher to study the consequences under different baseline. The following are the objectives of the present study:

- To find out the factors that causes the workplace stress by the respondents.
- To distinguish the effects of stress in both positive as well negative way on the respondents.
- To analyze and suggest the stress relievers to be adopted in respondents' work place.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on descriptive analysis. Primary data is used to study the objectives and for testing the hypotheses. A well reviewed structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. The primary data used for the study were collected for a

Table 1: Reliability statistics

Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
0.682	35

Table 2: Distribution of respondents on the basis of demographic factors

Demographic variables	Categories	Respondents (%)
Gender	Male	84
	Female	16
Age (in years)	<25	3
	26-35	16
	36-45	64
	>46	17
Designation	Top level	19
	Middle level	78
	Low level	3

period of two months from 1st January 2014 to 28th February 2014. The descriptive research design is applied and the exact affirmation of the problem has been given below.

Statement of the problem: The researchers have done lot of contribution in the field of stress management. The causes of stress, their effect in personal, health and professional development have made tremendous changes in the way employees are working in banks. Now the multiple roles of bank employees are exhaustive. The endless customer requirements needs to be attended by the employees may lead to lot of stress issues in the organization. Thus the aim of this research paper is to identify and propose a stress free, enjoyable environment to work for employees of nationalized banks.

Sample design: The sample has been collected from SBI employees of Thanjavur District only. The Interview schedule was administered in person randomly to the employees and the 100 samples were collected through random sampling method.

The internal consistency level of the administered questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha is given in the Table 1 and the alpha coefficient for the all 35 items is 0.682, which means that the items have relatively good internal consistency.

Tools applied for analysis: The techniques adapted for the analysis of results are Chi-square test, Frequency analysis and Friedman Two-way ANOVA analysis.

Analysis and interpretation:

Demographic characteristics: Table 2 represents the demographic features of the respondents.

About 84 % of the respondents are male and only 16% of the respondents are female. And the table shows that the majority of age category working in bank is 36-45 and only 3% of respondents belong to less than and equal to 25 years of age and the major group

Table 3: Stratified stress factors

Stress factors	Mean rank	Chi-square (significance at 5% level)
Non-performers in your team	3.93	83.88
Excessive work load	4.18	df = 8
Unstructured business processes	4.50	p = 0.000
Competition within the office	4.76	
Under staffing problems	5.10	
Performance not appreciated	5.22	
Pressure from department heads	5.48	
Long working hours	5.72	
Excessive work load	6.10	

Table 4: Relation between demographic variable and the factors of stress

Demographic variables	Chi-square value χ^2	Significance value	Resultant inference
Job designation	86.680	0.000	H ₀ rejected
Place	102.400	0.000	H ₀ rejected
Age	88.830	0.000	H ₀ rejected
Gender	119.400	0.000	H ₀ rejected
Marital status	147.562	0.000	H ₀ rejected

of respondents are middle level employers of the organization.

For better understanding and identification, main objective wise analysis and interpretation has been done.

Objective 1: Factors influencing the workplace stress: In order to find the factors influencing more on workplace stress Friedman two way ANOVAs have been used and the factors are stratified based on their Mean ranking value in Table 3.

As we found Table 3 that the non performers in team is ranked top with the mean value of 3.92, which means the most concerning factor of stress in work environment and the secondly placed factor is excessive work load with mean rank of 4.18 and third worrisome factor which causing distress is Unstructured Business processes with mean rank of 4.50 which mean the entire business structure itself act as a ground for the outrage of stress factors and the next factors to be concerned in work place is Competition within the office, followed by Under staffing problems, Performance not appreciated, Pressure from department heads, Long working Hours, Excessive work load.

Table 5: Stress rating with respect to demographic variables

Demographic variables	Categories	Stress rating					Total
		Level of stress					
		10-8	8-6	6-4	4-2	2-0	
Gender	Male	0	15	19	44	6	84
	Female	1	4	6	5	0	16
Age	<25	0	1	1	1	0	3
	26-35	1	6	3	6	0	18
	36-45	0	12	17	34	1	64
	>46	0	0	2	11	4	15
Designation	Top level	0	1	3	14	1	19
	Middle level	1	18	19	36	4	78
	Low level	0	0	3	0	0	3

And Chi-square analysis have also been carried out in order to find significant level of these stress factors and the Demographic variables.

Research hypothesis H₀ There is no relationship between demographic features of the respondent and opinion towards the factors influencing stress at work place at 5% level.

Table 4 clearly state that the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a relationship between all demographic variables and the respondent opinion towards the stress factors influencing them in work environment at 5% level.

And the Table 5 explains the stress rating in accordance with the demographic variables where the middle level employees under designation factor are exposed to more level of stress than the top and low level employees. From the analysis, it is ascertained that the high level of stress was found in the age group of 36-45 years of the respondent, where the age group above the age of 46 are subjected to less level of stress. And it is found that the overall stated stress rating level of this nationalized bank employees are 4-2 level of stress.

Objective 2: To distinguish the effects of stress in both positive as well negative ways by respondents: After the Chi-square analysis, the effect of stress has been addressed with respect to job designation using Friedman Two-Way ANOVA in Table 6.

Table 6 states that in positive effects of stress that increased responsibility as the major element with mean rank 1.68 which is followed by recognition with mean rank of 4.28 and with 4.36 mean ranking as the third opted factor in positive outcome of stress, reward for performance is placed and the least ranked factor is promotions with mean rank of 4.87 and these are the positive impacts of the workplace stress.

And while analyzing the negative effects of workplace stress, low focus or concentration leads with mean rank of 1.68, secondly physically drained with mean rank of 4.36 is the opted negative factor by the respondent which followed by emotionally drained

Table 6: Effect of stress (Friedman two way ANOVA)

Constituents	Mean rank	Chi-square (significance at 5% level)
Eu stress	1.68	361.373
Increased responsibility	4.87	df = 8
Promotions	4.48	p = 0.000
Increased salary	4.36	
Reward	4.28	
Recognition	6.51	
Negative effects of stress	1.68	
Low performance	5.67	
Low focus	5.67	
Sleepy and lethargic all day	8.49	
Frustrated and angry	4.36	
Differences in family	4.87	
Physically drained	4.48	
Health issue		
Emotionally drained		

Table 7: Respondents preference over stress relievers

Stress relievers	Frequency	(%)	Cumulative (%)
Spending time with family	51	51	51.0
Going on holiday	22	22	73.0
Time with friends	8	8	81.0
TV	8	8	89.0
Sleeping	5	5	94.0
Yoga	6	6	100
Total	100	100.0	100

factor with mean rank of 4.48 and the least workplace stress effect which creates negative impact from the Table 6 is ‘differences in family’ with least mean value of 8.49 which clearly explains that the employees are maintaining their work life balance well. As well as if we see that the chi-square value 361.373 is significant with respect to 12 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significant in ranking the stress effects which influences more on workplace.

Objective 3: To analyze stress relievers: The respondents’ opinion towards the practiced stress relievers was analyzed using appropriate statistical tools and the results are tabulated below.

From Table 7, it is understood that more than 50% of employees that is 51% of employees chosen that they spent time with family to relieve from workplace stress and the next top preference is going on holidays with is continued by spending time with friends by only 8% and equal preference is also given to relaxing through entertainment channels of watching TV/relaxing to music and the least preferred stress reliever is yoga which is opted only by 6% of the respondent. And it is been identified that only least number of employees concentrating on yoga as a medium for relaxation.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is found that the most distressing factor in work place is ‘non performers in team’ and most of the middle employees felt ‘unstructured business processes’ are the most stressing factor in work environment. And the positive consequence of stress are only highlighted most by the employees than negative consequence of stress and from the study it is found that ‘Increased responsibility’ is the prioritized

positive effect of stress and ‘low focus’ is identified as a negative effect of stress in workplace. It is also found that respondents are of the age group between 36-45 is having more stress compared to the other age group of respondents and only 12 of 64 employees rated high level of stress in the same age group. In designation wise, the middle level employees are subjected to more level of stress than top and low level employees. It is encountered that the most preferred stress relievers from respondents is only ‘spending time with family’ and the least opted stress relieving way as ‘yoga’ because only 6 in 100 people practice this way and almost 51 of 100 opted the prior one. The respondents are of the opinion that irrespective of their demographical variations exist in the work place, their agreement towards the factors of stress are of the same. It is to be noted that meeting customer demands is unanimously agreed cause for stress. Hence it is recommended that preparing clear job descriptions, clear definition of business processes. Motivating employees by both intrinsic and extrinsic ways and creating an OCTAPACE culture wherein individual performance and accountability are appreciated there by reducing the level of stress among employees. Most importantly, after the initiatives taken by the RBI, the bank employee’s responsibility is myriad. With the available infrastructure, limited human resource, network connectivity issues, modernized banking has put a lot more pressure on the part of employees. Hence, it is recommended that the top management should provide a mechanism to identify the level of stress, factors influencing and its effects through conducting a regular ‘Stress Audit’ at work spot. And also the researchers constructed on stress audit process to be carried under the following base lines:

- Health surveillance audit
- Employee and employer affiliation levels
- Conflict resolution methods
- Action plan for stress relievers
- Policy reviews on stress management

It is evident from the study that, employees are relieving their stress outside the hour and organization

which will not provide a continuous solution for their stress problems. Catering to respond the needs of the employee's emotional issues, it is suggested that an indoor counseling forum headed by HR department and a mini Yoga hall needs to be proposed for employees to practice the basic yoga exercises at regular interval at their work spot.

CONCLUSION

On the whole it is found that the stress level is varying with respect to the demographic variables and the approach over the stress by the bank employees predominately in positive direction only, which ensures the presence of Eu stress in their work place. But considerable focus is needed to reduce the existing level of stress for betterment of employees.

From the study it is clear that decorative designations, cushioned and air conditioned work spot, access to modern gadgets, extrinsic rewards and awards alone may not relief the stresses of employees. In order to meet the demands of the customers daily, the continuous follow up of stress audit, incorporating counseling or emotional forum and mini yoga theatre may help the employees to relive their inner stresses proactively.

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