

A Study of Work Stress amongst Public and Private Sector Bank Employees of North India

Karan Singh Negi¹ and O.P. Midha²

^{1,2}Rayat Bahra University Mohali, Punjab

E-mail: ¹karannegi1990@rediffmail.com, ²opmidha68@yahoo.com

Abstract—Work stress is a common problem that is affecting employees of organizations both in the formal and non-formal sector across the world. It is caused by many different factors related to the working conditions at work place and to the personal life of the employees and their relationships with superiors, colleagues and subordinates. The condition of stress adversely affects the performance of employees and this in turn impacts the working of the organization as a whole. Thus, the need for any organization to know about the causes of stress so that remedial measures can be taken. This study on work stress was conducted amongst employees of public and private sector banks of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh and Uttarakhand. It was based on informal interviews and responses of selected employees obtained through a detailed questionnaire designed for bringing out the causes of work stress. Several causes for work stress amongst employees have been identified as a result of this study. These would help the banks to take corrective measures so that there is improvement in their performance.

Keywords: Work stress; Employees; Causes; Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

Work stress is a phenomenon that comes from variety of reasons and affects people working at various places in different ways. It is a harmful, emotional or physical response that develops in employees of an organization due to various causes such as work pressure; working conditions, mismatching capabilities, resources and needs. Park (2007) [1] It is a common problem amongst employees in business organizations and affects their work performance; organizational climate; family and personal life. Stress at workplace is emerging as a major problem in India, more so as economic activities increase, there is pressure on employees to enhance their performance. Employers need to know about the factors causing stress amongst their employees as this problem has long term effects on the functioning of the organization and also on the health of the employees.

According to Negi (2015) [2] work stress may be caused by many different causes, either singly or in association with each other. The main causes of work stress are: Job insecurity; Fear of skill redundancy ; Frequent job changes; Unrealistic deadlines and expectations Technology overloads; Lack of

involvement in decision making Aggressive management style ; Harassment of the employee ; Competition; Increasingly diverse workforce ; Downsizing and Work/home conflict . A study by Aggarwal and Verma (2010) [3] brings out the concepts of stress, its consequences, symptoms, sources of stress and discusses various strategies to cope up with the stress along with diversity. In this study various psychological consequences such as an individual experiencing tension, headache, high blood pressure, psychological and behavior consequences of stress have been brought out. Kazmi et. al. (2008) [4] have reported that occupational stressors contribute to organizational inefficiency, high staff turnover, absenteeism due to sickness, decreased quality, and quantity of practice, increased costs of health care, and decreased job satisfaction. One of the organizational outcomes that affected by occupational stress is job performance.

In a study by Jensen and Lee (2008) [5] have examined the relationship between task-related incivility, revenge, and working harder. Their study suggests that organizations seeking to create a pleasant and productive workplace need to understand the victim's cognitive and emotional experiences in response to incivility.

Rashmi and Gole (2008) [6] conducted a study to understand the impact of stress on the performance of employees. Relationship between job stress, job satisfaction and performance was examined. They have reported two components resulting in stress- high level of job demands and little control over one's work. Impact of stress on productivity was the main concern of this research which has identified various strategies for improving the performance of the employees.

Panda (2007) [7] **highlighted** the various stress reactions that results in diseases like arthritis (inflammatory joint pains) and measured psychological work conditions. It is scientifically proven that stress can decrease immunity function rendering individuals more prone to health challenges.

The problem of work stress amongst employees causes psychosocial, behavioral and physiological effects.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study have been given in the following points-

1. To study the causes of work stress in the employees of the selected public and private sector banks of northern India.
2. To suggest the strategies of reducing the work stress amongst the employees.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this study is given in the following text

1. Primary data collection

A preliminary survey of public and private sector banks of Northern India was done to know about the different categories of employees working there; their age group; marital status; pay scale and educational background. The questionnaire was framed on the basis of initial field visits so as to capture the data on work stress and related aspects. The respondents were the employees of the banks of all levels. The interview was conducted to know the level of the work stress and the impact level of the stress on the employees working in the banks and their dealing with the customers. The questionnaires were designed on the basis of 5 scale rating. The respondents were asked to rate the questions as strongly agree, agree, neither agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The respondents were of different age groups, qualifications, income and the level of the working like clerical level, middle level, senior level etc.

a. Selection of banks

The banks were classified as public and private sector banks. In this process the few selected banks were taken for the study. In this the selected banks were taken on the basis of their customer base and location. These banks are as follows:-

1. Union Bank of India
2. State Bank of India
3. Punjab National Bank
4. State Bank of Patiala
5. Axis bank
6. ICICI bank
7. HDFC Bank

These banks were selected for the survey and the data was collected from them. These banks are located in the urban areas of northern India. The respondents were requested to fill the questionnaires designed to bring out the causes of work stress and different aspects of work performance.

b. Sampling process

The sampling process or the sampling method was adopted as follows:

- i. Sampling method adopted was Stratified Random Sampling
- ii. Sampling population size was 295 respondents
- iii. Sampling area – parts of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Uttarakhand
- iv. The population details included were the clerical level, senior level, middle level and probationary level employees working in these banks at different locations in the sampling area. They belonged to different age groups; male/female; varying lengths of service and various educational qualifications.

2. Secondary data collection

The secondary data was collected on the basis of different publications and unpublished literature.

3. Analysis of data

The analysis of the data was done by the use of the statistical tools to arrive at results and conclusions.

4. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

This research was carried out to study the perception of the employees of public and private sector banks on their work attitude. It is important to know the work place stress of the employees in the banks so as to help the management to necessary steps for improving the performance of the employees and indirectly the banking sector as a whole.

The main causes for work stress amongst employees working in public and private sector banks of the study area are:-

- Job insecurity
- Lack of job performance
- Future job changes
- Fear of skill redundancy
- Unrealistic deadlines and expectations
- Unmanageable workload
- Lack of involvement of employees in decision making
- Aggressive style of management of the banks
- Lack of support from the fellow employees
- Isolation at work
- Personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behavior
- Lack of understanding and leadership

- Superior forever finding faults in the employees
- Others taking credit of personnel achievements of the employees
- Poor relationship with the colleagues
- Friction and anger between the colleagues
- Unwanted posting of employees in the bank
- Insufficient breaks
- Over demanding and inflexible work schedule
- Work in bank interferes with the home/ personal life of the employees
- Poor physical working conditions
- Pressure of working long hours
- Repetitive and highly specialized work routines

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, both the public and private sector banks need to take the following steps for improving reducing stress and improve workplace performance amongst its employees:

- a. A special cell needs to be set up in each bank for taking effective steps for improving reducing stress and improve workplace performance amongst its employees.
- b. It has been brought out from this study that respondents feel that at work place they tend to stick to old ways of doing things. This attitude will change when innovative techniques and approaches are introduced. This will help in increasing positive attitude amongst the employees.
- c. Banks also need to find out ways in which financial incentives can be linked to how well the employees do their job.
- d. Major decisions need to be taken in consultation with the employees of the banks.
- e. The banks need to take steps for reducing the causes of stress which have been identified by the employees. The following causes of work stress can be reduced: Job insecurity ; Lack of job performance ;Future job changes ;Fear of skill redundancy ;

Unrealistic deadlines and expectations ;Unmanageable workload ;Lack of involvement of employees in decision making ; Aggressive style of management of the banks ; Lack of support from the fellow employees ;Isolation at work ; Personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behavior; Lack of understanding and leadership; Superior forever finding faults in the employees ; Others taking credit of personnel achievements of the employees ;Poor relationship with the colleagues; Friction and anger between the colleagues ; Unwanted posting of employees in the bank ; Insufficient breaks ; Over demanding and inflexible work schedule; Work in bank interferes with the home/ personal life of the employees; Poor physical working conditions; Pressure of working long hours and Repetitive and highly specialized work routines

- f. Work performance can be improved by removing the causes of stress; improving work attitude; organizational climate and positive organizational policy and employee orientation.

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