

A Study of Public Sector Bank Employees on their Work Stress and Performance in Solan and Sirmur Districts of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract—Work place stress and performance of employees working in commercial organizations are vital parameters for assessing and enhancing overall performance and improving productivity. Work stress is a phenomenon that comes from a variety of reasons and affects people working at various places in different ways. It affects the working of the employees both at work place and at home. 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. Workplace performance is the performance of employees in the work place. It is influenced by many factors like workplace attitude, working conditions and stress and other factors.

The results of a study conducted amongst the public sector bank employees of Solan and Sirmur districts of Himachal Pradesh has been presented in this paper. It was based on informal interviews and a questionnaire designed to bring out various aspects of work stress and performance of employees of the selected banks. The respondents were from different age groups, educational backgrounds, lengths of service, genders and hierarchical levels. Stratified random sampling was done for covering different groups of employees. Diversity of the respondent employees has helped in enhancing the quality of the results. Various causes of work stress amongst the employees have been brought out. Impact of stress on the performance of the employees has also been brought out on the basis of this study. The results will be of use for the bank management in taking suitable measures to reduce stress and improve performance.

Keywords: Stress, Performance, Banks, Causes, Employees

1. INTRODUCTION

Workplace has been described as the environment that enables work to be done. It is usually the place where work is performed and could be a shop, office, factory or bank or any other place. In recent years, the conditions in work place have changed considerably, particularly in banks and other commercial organizations. Work stress is a condition that occurs due to abnormal situations that occur due to variety of reasons and affects people working at various places in different ways. It affects the working of the employees both at work place and at home. It is important for employers 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. Workplace performance is the performance of employees in the work place. It is influenced by many factors like workplace attitude, working conditions and stress and other factors. Work stress often affects work place performance of the employees in an organization.

The business world is changing very fast and in this scenario, the role of banks has become very important as they provide the mechanism for almost all financial transactions to take place. Amongst banks, the public sector banks account for bulk of the transactions in most parts of India, though the reach of private sector banks is also increasing at a steady rate. Thousands of employees of all levels are working in banks in India and they contribute significantly for meeting the long and short term objectives of the organization as a whole; also for industrial growth; rural development; growth of the small and medium scale sector and promoting entrepreneurship. Most of these employees are fairly well educated and trained, passing through a specified recruitment process which includes written test and interviews. Optimum performance of these employees is essential for maintaining high levels of productivity and competitiveness in the banks.

Park (2007)¹ states that work stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when job requirements do not match the worker's capabilities, resources and needs in the companies which are centralized most of the employees take stresses because of their less involvement in decision making. One reason of stress in workplace occurs when companies give many responsibilities to the employees but not provide enough resources to fulfill them. Kazmi et. al (2008)² have stated 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. The purpose of their present study was to investigate the effect of job stress on job performance. The prevention and management of workplace stress requires organizational level interventions,

because it is the organization that creates the stress. Kivimaki et. al. (2002)³ conducted a study to understand work stress and its adverse effect on health. The researchers used Job Strain Model and Effort- Reward-Imbalance model to analyze the relation between high job demand and risk of health from Cardiovascular Diseases. This research has been conducted as a Cohort Study with 5 year and 10- year follow up. Sample selected was the group of people working in metal industry in Finland. It study reveals that high job strain and high demand at work continuously may result in cardiovascular diseases and high rate of mortality caused due to such diseases.

Vivek and Janakiraman (2013)⁴ state that occupational stress has become one of the global issues in the current working environment. Especially it is not good for organizations such as financial institutions where lump sum money is involved in day to day activities. Also the modernization of the industry led to various changes in the working environment there by challenging the ability of employees to cope up with it. Due to these reasons, employees working in financial sector particularly bank employees are more prone to stress. Hence it is mandatory to study their stress levels in order to avoid negative consequences.

According to Negi (2014)⁵, studies of this type help in bringing out the causative factors of work stress which is affecting work place performance so that the management could initiate steps for reducing stress and improving workplace performance. These are of immense use to the management of the banking sector as it helps them in understanding various causes of work stress and work out ways to eliminate them. Workplace performance also needs to be studied in the context of work stress.

2. OBJECTIVES

Employees working at different levels in selected public sector banks of Solan and Sirmur district of Himachal Pradesh were taken as the population for this study. This study is based on the perception of the employees working in these banks on work stress and work performance.

The main objectives of the study were:

- i. To study various aspects of work stress amongst the employees including the main causes.
- ii. To study work performance amongst the employees.
- iii. To outline various measures that could be taken for managing stress and improving work performance.

3. STUDY AREA

Two districts of Himachal Pradesh, viz Solan and Sirmur have been taken for this study. These are located in the south eastern part of the state and share their borders with Haryana, Chandigarh and Uttarakhand. Parts of these districts are also industrial hubs viz Baddi, Nalagarh, Parwanoo, Kala Amb and

Paonta Sahib. There are two major towns – Solan and Nahan in Solan and Sirumur districts respectively. Solan district is also emerging as an educational hub for higher education in the state with many universities in the private sector. The rest of the district has an agricultural based economy.

Sirmur district consists of a largely agricultural based economy though there are two industrial hubs. Nahan is the largest town, the other being Rajgarh. These districts have been selected for this study as they include both urban and rural areas and the commercial activities have a mix of industry, agriculture and other commercial activities. Public and private sector banks are functioning in all parts of the two selected districts and employees working in the branches located at different places have been taken as a sample population.

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for conducting this study has been described in the following text:

1-Initial survey

This involved an initial survey of the banks located in different parts of these two districts. Banks of the public sector dominate the banking activities in the selected districts though many private sector banks have also started functioning in the urban centres of the study area. Both the public and private sector banks are meeting the banking needs of the population and also of the businessmen, tourists and other visitors. The location of public sector banks was also seen in the rural areas where they cater to the needs of the agricultural community. The public sector banks located in different parts of these two districts were selected for conducting this study, based on the preliminary visits on random basis.

2-Selection of public sector banks

Many public sector banks are operating in Solan and Sirmur districts, both in the urban and rural areas. Their branches are located in different places. They include the following banks:

- a) State Bank of India.
- b) State Bank of Patiala.
- c) Punjab National Bank.
- d) Union Bank of India.
- e) Allahabad Bank

The banks listed in above text were selected and their branches located in urban, industrial and rural areas were selected for this study. General observations were made on the business activities and customer size and composition before selecting the branches to be covered in this study. The selection of branches was done in a way that they covered a cross section of all these areas in both the districts.

3-Introductory visits

Preliminary or introductory visits were conducted with the object of meeting and becoming familiar with the employees of all levels working in these banks. After these informal interviews were done with the aim of developing the questionnaire and collecting the data required for this study.

4-Primary data collection

A detailed questionnaire was developed for collecting primary data of the employees on work stress and work performance. Different questions were framed in a way so as to bring out stress and performance aspects with the help of a five point scale against each question. This includes – strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree and strongly disagree. The primary data collection was done through informal interviews with the employees of the bank. Thereafter, randomly selected employees were requested to fill the questionnaire for knowing their perception on work stress and work performance.

5--Secondary data collection

Secondary data was collected from various publications including books, journals, annual reports and unpublished literature and web sites.

6-Data analysis

The data collected as a part of the above mentioned process was analyzed by using standard statistical techniques in order to bring out stress and performance in the employees of the public sector banks of these two districts of Himachal Pradesh.

5. SAMPLING PROCESS

The sampling processes adopted for this study are:

1. Sampling Method:- Stratified random Sampling
2. Sample Size:- 90 Respondents
3. Sampling Units:- Senior level, Middle level and Clerical staff
4. Sampling Area:- Solan and Sirmur districts of Himachal Pradesh
5. Population details: - The population sampled comprised of the senior level, middle level and clerical staff of the banks. Senior officers of the selected banks also played a vital role in providing the required data for this study.

The selected respondents included:

- i. Female and male employees
- ii. Employees with different length of services
- iii. Employees at different levels in the bank
- iv. Employees with different qualifications
- v. Employees of different age groups

6. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of this study, the following results and conclusions can be drawn:

1. A majority of the employees agree and strongly agree that their bank has specific culture and values; it makes good use of their skills and abilities and offers the necessary training to do the job well.
2. Most of the employees strongly agree or agree that the bank offers real opportunities to improve their skills and abilities and provides them with the necessary resources to do their job well.
3. A large proportion of the employees are satisfied with the information received from the management on what is going on in the bank and are fully satisfied with the way the bank functions. They also strongly agree and agree that their work gives them a feeling of personal accomplishment
4. A considerable proportion of the employees would recommend their bank as a good place to work.
5. On the other hand most employees do not agree that all employees are treated fairly. They do not feel that management listens to the problems of the employees.
6. A majority of the employees agree that bank is making good use of their skills and abilities and that the bank offers technology including IT to meet their working needs and those of their customers.
7. The majority of the employees are committed towards the objective of the banks; they like to participate in the decision making process and are able to meet needs of the customers.
8. The performance of the employees helps the bank in meeting its goals and objectives and employees always look for ways to improve their performance.
9. Most employees do not agree that work environment in the bank allows them to be highly productive; there are rewards for better work performance; staff meeting have open and honest participation and if the work load increases their colleagues help them in its disposal.
10. A majority of the employees do not feel that job insecurity or lack of job permanence is the cause of stress. They also disagree that work stress is due to future job change or fear of skill redundancy. However for the employee's unrealistic deadlines and expectations and technology overload are the reasons for work stress.
11. For most of the employees unmanageable workload and lack of involvement in decision making causes stress. However for a majority of the respondent's, aggressive management styles are not affecting the workplace culture.

12. Most employees do not agree that lack of support from other employees and peers causes stress.
13. Majority of the respondents do not see isolation at work as a cause for stress or that stress is due to personal harassment in the form of unkind words and behavior.
14. Work stress is due to hostile threat from workers and lack of understanding and leadership.
15. A majority of the employees feel that work stress is due to superiors forever finding fault and others taking credit for personal achievements.
16. Most employees do not agree that work stress is due to poor relationships with colleagues and friction or anger between colleagues may lead to work stress.
17. Another reason which has been identified for work stress is unwanted place of posting in the bank.
18. For a majority of employees work stress is due to insufficient breaks and over demanding and inflexible work schedule. Stress is also due to little control over life at work.
19. However most employees do not face work stress due to excessive travel time.
20. Work stress is not due to interference of bank duties in the home or personal life of the employees.
21. Other reasons which have been identified for work stress include dull and repetitive work; dealings with difficult customers and pressure of working long hours; slow work speed and lack of clarity about their duties.
22. Majority of the employees agree or strongly agree that work stress is affecting their performance.

The causes of work stress which in turn affects work place performance in the public sector banks of Solan and Sirmur districts in Himachal Pradesh are:

- a) Unrealistic deadlines and technology overload and lack of involvement in the decision making process.
- b) Hostile threat from workers and lack of understanding and leadership.
- c) Superiors forever finding fault and others take credit for personal achievements.
- d) Unwanted place of posting in the bank.
- e) Insufficient breaks and over demanding and inflexible work schedule and little control over life at work.
- f) Dull and repetitive work; dealings with difficult customers and pressure of working long hours; slow work speed and lack of clarity about their duties.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TACKLING WORK STRESS

1. There should be proper use of technology and proper time period should be given to complete the deadline of the given targets to the employees.
2. There should be involvement of the junior level staff with the middle level employees to take part in the decision making in the bank management and its functioning.
3. The superiors must help and encourage their subordinates in their performance in the bank
4. There must be a better relationship amongst the superiors and subordinates in the working
5. The posting of the employees should be adequate and with a proper working facility should be provided to them
6. There should be proper time period of the work and there should not be tight schedules of the employees
7. There should not be repetition of the work amongst the employees while dealing with the customers and there should be proper token system being used for dealing with the customers so as to reduce the stress amongst the customers and the employees

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