

Prevalence of Occupational Stress among Bankers

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ABSTRACT: The present study was conducted to identify the level of occupational stress in bankers as well as to determine difference, if any, in occupational stress of employees from Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Banks. The sample comprised of 100 employees, 50 each from Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Banks in Chandigarh, having minimum one year of job experience in the same bank. The data was collected through standardized tool of “Occupational Stress Index” by Srivastava and Singh (1976). The findings revealed highly significant difference in occupational stress of employees working in Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Banks, with employees of Non-Nationalized Banks having higher occupational stress as compared to their counterparts working in Nationalized Banks.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Nationalized Banks, Non- Nationalized Banks

I. INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress has been called “21st Century disease”. It is a serious problem for professionals whose work involves intense involvement with clients. It conveys the idea of energy extinguished and the fire of enthusiasm dampened. Occupational stress is associated with situations in which a person feels:

- ❖ Overworked, underappreciated, confused about expectations and priorities.
- ❖ Concerned about job security, overcommitted with responsibilities
- ❖ Resentful about duties that are not commensurate with pay.

According to Scott (2006) stressors 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. Occupational Stress spreads gradually and continuously over time, sending people into downward spiral from where it is hard to recover.

During the past decade, the banking sector has undergone rapid and striking policy changes due to globalization & liberalization and increased competition because of the entrance of more private (corporate) sector banks, downsizing, introduction of new technologies, etc. The advent of technological changes, especially extensive use of computers in the sector has changed the work patterns of the bank employees and has made it inevitable to downsize the work force in the sector. The implications of the above said transformations are likely to mark their effect on the social, economical and psychological domains of the bank employees and their relations. Due to these changes, the employees in the banking sector seem to experience stress and strain.

There is close relationship between occupational stress and performance. The association between stress and performance results in three zones: under, optimum, and over. The first zone exemplifies what happens when employees are under challenged or under stimulated and productivity is low. In effect, they suffer from boredom, fatigue, dissatisfaction with their profession. At the other extreme are employees who have been going too hard for too long and burn out. They exhibit ambitious, aggressive, and impatient characteristics. These are not bad traits in themselves, but these employees have not yet learned their limitations and stress themselves out. Stress affects the whole person, including his intellectual, mental, emotional, social and physical performance. However, stress in itself and in proper amount is not bad. It can be compared to one’s body temperature; one must have its exit, to maintain its proper level if the temperature rises. The prescription is logical: increase your stress intake (take one more responsibility or new assignment) when you are under stimulated and decrease stress intake (reduce the unnecessary overload) when over stimulated.

Objectives of the paper

1. To find out occupational stress among employees working in Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Banks.
2. To determine difference, if any, in level of occupational stress between employees of Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Banks.

II. METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive list of all the Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Banks of Chandigarh, Panchkula and S.A.S Nagar, Mohali was obtained from the internet. From this list, 5 banks each from both Nationalized and Non Nationalized Banks were selected by simple random sampling technique. A total of 10 banks in all were selected for the study. From each bank a comprehensive list of bank employees, having minimum 1 year of job experience of working in the same bank, were prepared. From this list, 10 employees were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Thus, from all the 10 banks, 100 employees (50 from Nationalized and 50 from Non-Nationalized Banks) fulfilling the above mentioned criteria comprised of the final sample.

Psychological Tool Used

Occupational Stress Index (OSI)

A standardized Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava and Singh (1976) was used for determining the occupational stress. It measures the extent of stress which employees perceive arising from various constituents and conditions of their jobs. It is reported to be highly reliable and valid. For assessing the reliability, the authors used both split-half method and Cronbach's alpha- coefficient. For nearly all the sub scales of the tool, the values were found to be .935 and .90, respectively. The authors found out validity of the OSI by computing coefficient of correlation between the sub scales of the inventory which turned out to be high.

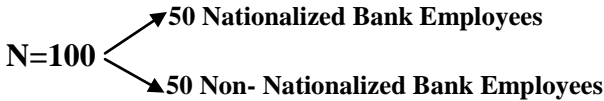
Statistical Analysis

For analyzing the data, percentage distribution was used to find out percentage distribution of subjects with regard to occupational stress and 't' test was applied to find out difference in the level of occupational stress as well as its components in the employees of Nationalized and Non- Nationalized Banks.

III. RESULTS

Table 1 presents data regarding the percentage distribution of employees as well as total sample with regard to occupational stress.

Table-1 Level of Occupational Stress among Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Bank Employees



Variable	Categories	Employees in Nationalized Banks (%)	Employees in Non-Nationalized Banks (%)	Total Sample (%)
Occupational stress	Low	44.0	24.0	34.0
	Moderate	52.0	42.0	47.0
	High	4.0	34.0	19.0

The findings in Table-1 highlight that majority of employees working in Nationalized Banks had moderate (52%) followed by low levels of stress (44%). On the other hand, majority of employees working in Non-Nationalized Banks had moderate (42%) followed by high level of stress (34%). So it can be concluded that employees working in Non-Nationalized Banks had higher occupational stress than those working in Nationalized Banks.

Table 2 presents data regarding 't' value for mean scores of bank employees with regard to occupational stress as well as its components.

Results in Table 2 reveal highly significant difference ($t=4.351, p<.01$) in the total mean scores of occupational stress between the employees of Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Banks, with employees of

Table-2: Significance of Difference in Mean Scores of Occupational Stress between Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Bankers

N=100
 ↗ 50 Nationalized Bank Employees
 ↘ 50 Non-Nationalized Bank Employees

Variable	Components	Nationalized Bank Employees			Non-Nationalized Bank Employees			t value
		Mean	SD	SEM	Mean	SD	SEM	
Occupational stress	Role overload	18.80	3.907	.553	19.12	3.612	.511	.425
	Role ambiguity	9.86	2.010	.284	12.24	2.282	.323	5.534**
	Role conflict	13.42	3.038	.430	15.14	2.347	.332	3.168**
	Unreasonable group pressure	11.22	2.542	.359	12.52	2.252	.318	2.707
	Under participation	11.80	2.356	.333	14.02	3.113	.440	4.021**
	Responsibility for persons	9.44	1.618	.229	9.06	1.867	.264	1.088
	Poor peer relation	11.94	1.953	.276	12.86	3.051	.431	1.796
	Intrinsic impoverishment	10.52	2.435	.344	12.12	1.792	.253	3.743**
	Powerlessness	8.82	2.210	.313	9.10	1.594	.225	.727
	Strenuous working conditions	10.88	2.353	.333	11.86	2.650	.375	1.956
	Low status	6.88	1.686	.238	7.96	1.690	.239	3.199**
	Unprofitability	6.06	1.621	.229	6.24	1.673	.237	.546
	Total	129.64	14.093	1.993	142.24	14.857	2.101	4.351**

** p < .01

Non-Nationalized Banks having higher occupational stress as compared to their counterparts in Nationalized Banks.

As far as the component of occupational stress are concerned, highly significant difference was found in the mean scores of role ambiguity ($t= 5.534, p < .01$), role conflict ($t=3.168, p<.01$), under participation ($t=4.021, p< .01$), intrinsic impoverishment ($t=3.743, p< .01$) and low status ($t=3.199, p< .01$) between the employees of Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Banks. All these components of occupational stress were found higher in **Non-Nationalized Bank employees than those in Nationalized Bank employees.**

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study are in agreement with the findings of research studies conducted by Sadat Ali, Al-Habdan and Shriyan (2005) and Kumar (2008). Their findings revealed significant difference in the level of occupational stress as well as its various components viz. role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict between Government and Private sector bank employees. The employees working in Government Banks were found to fare better than those in Private sector.

On the contrary, Macklin *et al.* (2006) did a research using a heterogeneous community sample of Public and Private sector employees and found no significant difference between the employees of these two sectors on levels of their stress.

The possible reason for the present findings could be that the employees working in Non-Nationalized Banks have longer working hours as compared to their counterparts working in Nationalized Banks. Majority of Non-Nationalized Bank employees on an average work for 9 hours everyday whereas those working in Nationalized Banks work for 7 hours/day. On the top of it a large majority of Non-Nationalized Bank employees do overtime work at least for 2-4 hours for 6-10 days on an average in a month as is revealed from personal profile of the employees in the present study. The long working hours/day as well as over time work leave them stressed out.

The finding of the present study would provide useful insight to policy makers in Nationalized and Non-Nationalized Banks. The findings can help them to take suitable measures and actions to help employees to destress them which can help in increasing output and employee's stability in their respective banks.

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