

Occupational factors and Job Stress among Traditional scheduled bank (TSB) and new private sector bank (NPSB) employees in Kerala

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary societies majority of people seem to talking about stress and its various consequences. In the modern world of 21st century “stress” is termed as the “disease of century” as it is believed to cause more ailments than anything known to modern medicine. Stress on individuals ranges from personal day-to-day life to their organizational activities. Stress has been on a rise in this era of high-technology speed, global competition and consumerism. Stress has been on a rise in this era of high-technology speed, global competition and consumerism. Taking its toll on the physical and psychological health of the employees, it is affecting the productivity and functioning of an organization. This article is a discussion on the occupational factors affecting job stress of bank employees.

1. Introduction

The word ‘Stress’, an outcome of a Latin language word ‘Stringere’, which means ‘to draw tight’¹ is a consequence of or a general response to an action or situation that places special physical or psychological demands, or, both on a person. Right from the time of birth till the last breath drawn, every individual is subjected to various stressful situations. Stress involves the interaction of a person and that person’s environment. Hans Selye first introduced the concept of stress in to the life science in 1936. Stress is often termed as twentieth century syndrome born out of man’s race towards modern progress and its ensuring complexities. Stress has become a part of day-to-day living of every individual. On the one side, stress provides the means to express talents and energies, and pursue happiness; while on the other it can also cause exhaustion and illness, either physical or psychological². Ever increasing needs and aspirations, high competition, pressures of meeting deadlines and uncertainty of future and weakened social support system have made the life of majority of people highly stressful in modern societies. The reactions to intense psychological stress has become a major concern of psychological, psychiatric, and medical investigations. The modern world, which is a world of achievement, is also a world of stress³.

Occupational stress relates to the experience of stress in one’s place of work, occupation or employment. Occupational stress refers to a situation where occupation related factors interact with employee to change i.e. disrupts or enhance his / her psychological and or physiological conditions such that the person is forced to deviate from normal functioning. Occupational stress is generally defined in terms of relationship between a person and his environment. Stress at work resulting from complexities of work and its divergent demand, has become a prominent and pervading feature of the modern organizations. Stress in occupation is a condition or feeling experienced when employee perceives that “demands placed on him exceed the personal and social resources he is able to mobilize”. He has a feeling of losing control over events, which is stressful. The researchers in the area of organizational psychology and management have used the term job stress to

denote employees’ mental state aroused by a job situation or a combination of job situations perceived as presenting excessive and divergent demands. Some stress researchers have emphasized the role of job situations in their definition of job occupational stress.

According to Kalia (2002)⁴, an estimate of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Burden of Disease Survey shows that mental health disease, including stress-related disorders, will be the second leading cause of disabilities by the year 2020. A survey in 2007 by Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India also reported that work related stress and mental fatigue is affecting the Indian employees. NIOSH and the Centers for Disease Control both report that the services industry has the highest risk of occupational stress for workers. In 2001, the CDC reports⁵ that 63.5 percent of reported cases of occupational stress were in the technical industry, sales industry and people working in administrative positions. Other risk factors for occupational stress may include females, non-minorities and the age of workers. Stress in the workplace can have many origins or come from one single event. It can impact on both employees and employers alike. Canadian Mental Health Association⁶ stated that, fear of job redundancy, layoffs due to an uncertain economy and increased demands for overtime due to staff cutbacks act as negative stressors. Stress has become a major buzzword and legitimate concern of the times. Several nationwide surveys have indicated that, in many firms, an average of about 25% of all employees suffer from stress-induced problems.

The banking system has witnessed various alterations and policy modifications which have revolutionalised the present day banking scenario. The present banking system is highly complex and competitive and has undergone tremendous policy changes. The stress level among bank employees is increasing due to heavy workload, difficulty in completing the targets in time, lack of leisure time etc. and it differs from person to person depending up on their individual personality and organizational climate. The stress level also has greater

influence on the productivity of employees. Although a lot of studies have been conducted on the psychosocial side of the new policy regime in many sectors, there are only few studies, as far as the banking sector is concerned, though the sector has been drastically influenced by the new policies. This paper is an attempt to study the occupational factors affecting the job stress.

2. Statement of the Problem

The advent of technological revolution coupled with globalization and privatization policies has changed the conventional patterns in the banking sector and the working style of bank employees resulting in stress generating work environment, that is, providing or increasing stress to the employees. The stress level also has greater influence on the productivity of employees. This paper is an attempt to study the occupational factors affecting the job stress of TSB and NPSB employees in Kerala.

3. Significance of the study

It involves the analysis of the influence of the occupational factors among the employees belonging to the medium and high stress category in TSBs and NPSBs. It also involves a comparison of occupational factors between TSBs and NPSBs.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the influence of occupational factors on job stress among TSB and NPSB employees in Kerala.
- To compare the occupational factors between TSB and NPSB employees in Kerala.

5. Hypothesis

In this paper, the following hypothesis is formulated and tested
 H_{01} : There is no significant difference in the mean score of the occupational factors between TSBs and NPSBs.

5.1 Occupational factors of stress

The stress experienced by an employee in the workplace also gets affected by some fundamental factors related with the job such as work culture, basic characteristics of the job, role played by the employee etc. Three types of occupational factors are identified, namely, Job Characteristics and Attributes, Job Difficulty and Role Difficulty. **Job Characteristics and Attributes** is concerned with high responsibility in the job, money related nature of the job, repetitive nature of job, hard working in the job and ability to use personal skills in the job. **Job Difficulty** includes difficulty to complete job in time, long working hours in the job, time for rest and entertainments in the job, higher targets in the job and large quantity of work in the job etc. **Role Difficulty** is related with conflict of job role with family and social role, role authority in the job, and availability of clear and precise information regarding the role etc.

6. Operational Definition of Concepts

6.1 Traditional Scheduled Banks (TSBs)

Traditional scheduled banks are those banks included in the second schedule of the RBI Act of 1934 and started operation even before 1991.

6.2 New Private Sector Banks (NPSBs)

Private banks which are permitted to start in mid-90's after introducing prudential norms for the banking system in 1993. Introduction of LPG in 1991 has made dramatic changes in the functioning of new private sector banks. New prudential norms, such as capital adequacy prescriptions, identification of bad debts, Provision requirements etc. were enforced, and interest rates were deregulated.

6.3 Stress

Stress means the job stress among the employees of Traditional scheduled banks and New Private Sector banks in Kerala due to occupational factors.

7. Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and mainly based on primary data. Primary data were collected from the employees of TSBs and NPSBs by a structured interview schedule and on the spot discussions were also made with officials of these two types of banks. For the purpose of this study, the entire Kerala was divided into three zones namely North, Central & South. One district from each zone was deliberately selected to represent the regions- Kozhikode from northern region, Ernakulum from central region and Thiruvananthapuram from southern region, since all the new private sector banks have an active presence in these districts. Each of these three districts was again divided in to three groups as urban, semi-urban and rural areas.

In the present study the researcher calculated the sample size using power analysis on the basis of information obtained from the pilot study. The power analysis shows that a sample of 320 or more is adequate for the study. In this study, the collection of data was based on multistage sampling from the two types of banks, namely Traditional Scheduled Banks (TSBs) and New Private Sector Banks (NPSBs) operating in Kerala. The sample size was 378 respondents; 246 from TSBs and the remaining 132 from NPSBs.

In this study, all the items were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Logistic regression was used to analyze the influence of stress factors for respondents belonging to medium and high stress category. Likelihood ratio test was applied to check the relationship between dependent variable and independent variable in the case of stress factors. Z test was used to compare the personal factors between the employees of TSB and NPSB.

7.1 Research Instrument and Reliability Analysis

The interview schedule was developed by the researcher after an extensive review of literature and in consultation with the experts who were working in the field of commerce and management to determine its face and content validity. A five point Likert scale was used for data collection. An assessment of the statistical reliability is necessary before any further validation analysis. Reliability refers to degree of dependability

or consistency of a scale. The table (1) gives the reliability of the measures considered.

Total	378	100
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Source: Primary Data

Table (1) Reliability of Variables

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No: of items used to measure
Occupational factors	0.617	3

7.2 Classification of the Respondents

The table (2) shows the classification of the respondents on the basis of the nature of the banks.

Table (2) Classification of the respondents based on the nature of the banks

Nature of bank	Frequency	Percent
TSBs	246	65.1
NPSBs	132	34.9
Total	378	100

Source: Primary Data

Based on the nature of the banks, samples of the present study are classified into two. They are employees from Traditional Scheduled Banks (TSBs) and New Private Sector Banks (NPSBs). 65.1 percent of the total samples (378) are from TSBs and remaining 34.9 percent are from NPBs.

7.3 Classification of Stress

The total stress score of the respondents is divided into three categories such as low, medium and high. The respondents whose score is less than 35% belong to the low stress category, between 35 to 75 per cent belong to medium and above 75% belong to the high stress category. The following table gives the distribution of the respondents belonging to the three categories.

Table (3) Classification of the respondents based on the stress

Stress	Frequency	Percent
Low	196	51.9
Medium	84	22.2
High	98	25.9

The table (3) reveals that, out of total 378 respondents, 51.9 % of the respondents have low stress and 25.9 % have high stress. It is also noted that 22.2 % of the respondents have only medium level of stress. Therefore, majority of the respondents have only low stress.

7.4 Influence of Occupational factors on Stress

To study the influence of the Occupational factors in creating stress among the respondents under high and medium stress category in TSBs and NPSBs, the researcher used the logistic regression, for which low stress category group is taken as reference group. The analysis is carried out separately for TSBs and NPSBs. Likelihood ratio test is also conducted to check the significance of relationship between stress (Dependent Variable) and occupational factors (Independent Variables).

Table (4) Likelihood Ratio Test for significance of relationship between stress and occupational factors - TSBs

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	514.058	52.638	6	<.001
Final	461.420			

Source: Primary Data

The table (4) shows that the initial log likelihood value obtained is 514.058, which is a measure of a model with no independent variable, that is only constant or intercept. The final log likelihood value obtained is 461.420 and this is measure of a model by considering all independent variables. The difference between these two measures is the model chi-square value, which is obtained as 52.638 and this has a significance $p < 0.001$. It indicates that there is significant relationship between stress and occupational factors in TSBs.

Table (5) Logistic regression to analyze the influence of occupational factors on stress - TSBs

Stress		B	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Medium	Intercept	-3.861			
	Job Characteristics and Attributes	.300	1.350	1.144	1.594
	Job Difficulty	.076	1.079	.983	1.185
	Role Difficulty	-.135	.874	.753	1.013
High	Intercept	-6.332			
	Job Characteristics and Attributes	.083	1.087	.936	1.262
	Job Difficulty	.141	1.152	1.057	1.255
	Role Difficulty	.156	1.169	1.027	1.330

The reference category: Low stress group
Source: Primary Data

The table (5) shows that the value of Exp (B) for Job Characteristics and Attributes and Job Difficulty is 1.350 and 1.079 respectively among respondents who belong to medium stress. The value of Exp (B) for Job Characteristics and Attributes, Job Difficulty and Role Difficulty is 1.087, 1.152 and

1.169 respectively for high stress. Based on this, it can be concluded that Job Characteristics and Attributes and Job Difficulty positively influence the stress for medium stress category while all the occupational factors positively influence stress for high stress category.

Table (6) Likelihood Ratio Test for significance of relationship between stress and occupational factors - NPSBs

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	189.346			
Final	173.014	16.332*	6	.012

Source: Primary Data

* = 0.05 Significant Level

The above table (6) shows that, the initial log likelihood value obtained is 189.346, which is a measure of a model with no independent variable, that is only constant or intercept. The final log likelihood value obtained is 173.014 and this is measure of a model by considering all independent variables.

The difference between these two measures is the model chi-square value, which is obtained as 16.332 and this has a significance $p=.012$. It shows that there is significant relationship between stress and occupational factors in NPSBs.

Table (7) Logistic regression to analyze the influence of occupational factors on stress –NPSBs

Stress		B	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Medium	Intercept	-5.418			
	Job Characteristics and Attributes	.477	1.611	1.227	2.115
	Job Difficulty	-.119	.888	.771	1.023
	Role Difficulty	-.104	.902	.733	1.109
High	Intercept	-2.822			
	Job Characteristics and Attributes	.171	1.187	.896	1.572
	Job Difficulty	-.009	.991	.855	1.150
	Role Difficulty	-.101	.904	.724	1.129

The reference category: Low stress group

Source: Primary Data

The above table (7) reveals that the value of Exp(B) for Job Characteristics and Attributes is 1.611 among respondents belonging to the medium stress, while, the value of Exp(B) for Job Characteristics and Attributes is 1.187 among respondents belonging to the high stress. Hence, it can be concluded that Job Characteristics and Attributes positively influence the stress of both medium and high stress category.

To study the Occupational factors between TSBs and NPSBs, Z test is used.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference in the mean score of the occupational factors between TSBs and NPSBs.

H₁: There is significant difference in the mean score of the occupational factors between TSBs and NPSBs.

7.5 Occupational factors and nature of banks

Table (8) Mean, SD and Z value of occupational factors based on nature of bank

Variable	Nature of Bank	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z	P
Occupational factors	TSBs	48.11	6.91	1.972	0.049
	NPSBs	49.71	8.52		

The table (8) shows that the mean score of occupational factors is high (49.71) with a SD of 8.52 among respondents belonging to the NPSBs and low (48.11) with a SD of 6.91 among the respondents belonging to the TSBs. Z value is 1.972 and P value is 0.049. Since the calculated value of P is less than 0.05, test is found to be significant. Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted and can be concluded that there is significant difference in the mean score of occupational factors between TSBs and NPSBs. It reveals that the

occupational factors play a different role in creating stress among respondents working in TSBs and NPSBs and it highly influences the stress of the respondents working in NPSBs.

Occupational factors are the combination of different sub factors such as Job Characteristics and Attributes, Job Difficulty and Role Difficulty. Therefore Z test is used for a detailed analysis to find out the difference of sub variables between TSBs and NPSBs.

Table (9) Mean, SD and Z value of sub variables of occupational factors based on nature of bank

Variable	Nature of bank	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z	P
Job Characteristics and Attributes	TSBs	15.09	2.39	1.406	0.16
	NPSBs	15.48	2.97		
Job Difficulty	TSBs	15.56	4.19	1.734	0.084
	NPSBs	16.35	4.24		
Role Difficulty	TSBs	17.46	2.58	1.295	0.196
	NPSBs	17.88	3.6		

Source: Primary Data

Table (9) shows that the mean score of the Job Characteristics and Attributes (P=0.16), Job Difficulty (P=0.084) and Role Difficulty (P=0.196) does not vary between TSBs and NPSBs as the P value is more than 0.05. It indicates that, Job Characteristics and Attributes, Job Difficulty and Role Difficulty play an equal role in creating stress among the respondents of both TSBs and NPSBs.

8. Major findings

- Out of total (378) sample, 51.9 percent of the respondents belong to the low stress category and remaining 48.1 percent belong to the medium and high stress category.
- Likelihood ratio test reveals that there is significant relationship between stress and occupational factors in TSBs.
- It is found that employees with medium stress in TSBs are positively influenced by Job Characteristics and Attributes and Job Difficulty, while high stress is positively influenced by Job Characteristics and Attributes, Job Difficulty and Role Difficulty.
- It shows that there is significant relationship between stress and occupational factors in NPSBs.
- Both medium and high stress of the employees in NPSBs is positively influenced by Job Characteristics and Attributes.
- Occupational factors as a whole, play a different role in creating stress among the employees working in both TSBs and NPSBs and highly influence the stress of the employees working in NPSBs. The analysis of the sub-variables shows that Job Characteristics and Attributes, Job Difficulty and Role Difficulty equally affect the stress of the employees working in both TSBs and NPSBs.

9. Conclusion

Occupational stress, also known as Work stress resulting from complexities of work and its divergent demand, has become a prominent and pervading feature of the modern

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organizations and it is an unavoidable consequences of life. The physiological, psychological and organizational effects of occupational stress are not only costly to individual employees and managers, but also to the organization, society and family. This article analysed the occupational factors affecting the job stress of the TSB and NPSB employees in Kerala. A significant relationship is found between stress and occupational factors both in TSB and NPSB .Occupational factors highly influence the stress of the employees working in NPSBs and Job Characteristics and Attributes, Job Difficulty and Role Difficulty equally affect the stress of the employees working in both TSBs and NPSBs. Therefore, to manage the problem of occupational stress in banking sector, some changes in the work/organizational culture with special reference to the occupational aspect is basically required in banking sector, which will enhance the Physiological, Psychological and Behavioural/Social well-being of the employees.

10. Recommendations

- The study reveals that, job difficulty affects the stress of the employees. Therefore, management may adopt a 'Shift Work Culture', which will reduce the stress of the employees caused by long working hours. Management may also take initiative to appoint adequate number of staff in all branches, thereby problem of work overload can be avoided.
- Findings show that Role Difficulty also affects the job stress. Therefore, while assigning different tasks (Job rotation) in TSBs, management may consider the work specialization, i.e., aptitude, talent and job knowledge of the employees, which will reduce the job stress and productivity of employees can be enhanced (Right person for the right place).

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