CHAPTER-V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study was undertaken in banking industry in northern districts of Tamilnadu. It has been purposively selected for its familiarity and unique performance in utilization of manpower productivity. The Indian banking sector has seen unprecedented growth along with remarkable improvement in its quality of assets and efficiency since economic liberalization began in the early 1990s.

From providing plain vanilla banking services, banks have gradually transformed themselves into universal banks. ATMs, Internet banking, mobile banking and social banking have made "anytime anywhere banking" the norm now. During the recent years, the whole environment has undergone significant changes regarding working times, years of employment, role of organization, type of employment contracts and working conditions.

FINDINGS BASED ON DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF RESPONDENTS:

1. Most of the respondents are from urban center bank followed by metropolitan center, semi urban center and rural bank center.

2. Overall 78% of the respondents are male and remaining 22% are female. Among the female respondents most of the people are first generation employee.

3. Most of the respondents are in the age range of above 35 years and remaining respondents are in the age bracket of below 35 years.

4. Most of the respondents are married and the remaining respondents are fall in the category of unmarried i.e., divorced, separated, single etc..

5. Only small proportion of the respondents are living in the joint family structure and remaining respondents are leading lives in the nuclear family structure.

6. Most of the respondents are the sole breadwinner for their family followed by two earning persons, three earning persons and more than three earning persons.
7. Most of the respondents are having experience in the banking sector less than fourteen years and the remaining respondent’s falls in the category of above fourteen years experience.

8. Most of the respondents have never smoked tobacco products followed by occasionally smoking category and frequently smoking category.

9. Most of the respondents never consumed alcohol in their life followed by occasional drinking and habitual drinking categories.

10. Majority of the Branch Managers (38%) are having many friends, 35.2% of Branch Managers are having few companions, 19.3% of Branch Managers are having only one friend and 7.5% of Branch Managers are having no friends.

11. 34.9% of Branch Managers are used to consulting with their families only on occasions followed by 22.4% who consult regularly with family and friends, 21.8% who consult a few times a week, 14.3% of Branch Managers who rarely consult with their families and 6.5% of Branch Managers never consult with their families.

12. Majority of the Branch Managers are used to sleeping for less than 6 hours followed by those who sleep 6 to 7 hours, 7 to 8 hours sleeping managers and only 14.3 % of Branch Managers are used to sleeping for 8 hours per night.

**FINDINGS IN THE LIGHT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS VARIABLES:**

1. Overall results of occupational stress reveal that all center branch managers i.e., metropolitan, urban, semi-urban and rural Branch Managers experience moderate level of occupational stress. It has been found that metropolitan center bank Branch Managers have a greater proportion of high occupational stress experiencing Branch Managers as compared to other center bank Branch Managers. Interestingly, rural bank Branch Managers also has a second greater proportion of high occupational stress experiencing Branch Managers. Urban center Branch Managers and semi-urban center Branch Managers are experiencing moderate level of occupational stress. From the one way ANOVA statistical test it is proved that there is significant difference between the Branch Managers of metropolitan, urban, semi-urban and rural center in
experiencing occupational stress level. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups was quite medium.

2. Both female Branch Managers and male Branch Managers experience high level of occupational stress. This is proved by independent sample ‘t’ test exhibit no significant mean difference with regard to occupational stress, significant at among the male and female bank Branch Managers.

3. Greater proportion of Branch Managers who falls in the age group of up to thirty five years and who falls in the age group of above thirty five years experience moderate level of stress. From the mean value of both the age category suggests that the branch manager who is in the category of above thirty five years age experience high level of occupational stress than their counterpart. Significant difference is found in the up to 35 years age and above 35 years age Branch Managers with respect to occupational stress, as was confirmed by independent sample ‘t’ test results.

4. Greater proportion of married Branch Managers experience moderate level of stress but unmarried Branch Managers experience high level of occupational stress. From the mean value of both the marital status category suggests that the branch managers who are unmarried experience high level of occupational stress than married Branch Managers. The married Branch Managers and unmarried Branch Managers have different levels of occupational stress as was confirmed by independent sample ‘t’ test.

5. Both nuclear family Branch Managers and joint family Branch Managers are experiencing moderate level of occupational stress. Mean value of both the category reveals that nuclear family Branch Managers need to bear high level of occupational stress than their counterpart. The nuclear family Branch Managers and joint family Branch Managers have different levels of occupational stress as was confirmed by independent sample ‘t’ test results.
6. Most of the Branch Managers who are the sole bread winner for their family experiencing high level of occupational stress than the other category Branch Managers. As was confirmed by one way ANOVA test that Branch Managers who are having different number of earning members in their family have different levels of occupational stress.

7. Most of the Branch Managers who are having less experience in the banking sector are experiencing high level of occupational stress than the experienced Branch Managers. The Branch Managers who are having different years of experience have different levels of occupational stress is accepted as was confirmed by independent sample ‘t’ test results.

8. Branch Managers who smokes regularly are more likely to report feeling stressed, depressed, worried, angry and sad than non-smokers, Majority of the respondents who are smoking continuously or chain smokers undergo high occupational stress than the less frequent smokers and non smoking Branch Managers. The Branch Managers who are having different frequency of smoking habit have different levels of occupational stress is accepted as was confirmed by one way ANOVA test results.

9. Majority of the habitual alcohol drinking Branch Managers experience high level of occupational stress than the less frequent alcohol drinkers and teetotalers. The Branch Managers who are having different frequency of alcohol consumption habit have different levels of occupational stress is accepted as was confirmed by one way ANOVA test results.

10. The Branch Managers who are having more number of companions are leading stress free occupation but at the same time the Branch Managers, whose friends are none are experiencing highest level of occupational stress.

11. The Branch Managers who never consult their grievances with the family and friends are experiencing high level of occupational stress than the managers who are consulting regularly with their families and friends.
12. Most of the Branch Managers who sleep less than 6 hours a day are experiencing highest level of occupational stress than the managers who are sleeping more than 8 hours a day.

13. All the correlations among and between the dimensions of occupational stress have been found to be highly significant at a level of P<0.05. It is also to be noted that all the correlations are positive. In other words, there is a significant positive relationship among all the occupational stress dimensions.

14. ‘Inter role distance” had achieved the strongest association with the overall occupational stress. “More customer focused”, “Persistent and result oriented”, “Role expectation conflict”, “Difficulties in decision making” were decisive factors in making up overall occupational stress. Among all the variables in the regression, ‘Personal inadequacy’ appeared to have least association with overall occupational stress.

FINDINGS IN THE LIGHT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND EMPLOYEE MORALE:

1. Overall results of employee morale reveal that urban, semi urban and rural center bank Branch Managers bear low level of morale while metropolitan center bank Branch Managers bear moderate level of morale.

2. It has been found that metropolitan bank centers have a greater proportion of low morale bearing Branch Managers as compared to other bank center executives. While, rural bank center have a greater proportion of low morale bearing Branch Managers, vis-a-vis their counterparts. As far as urban, semi urban and rural bank Branch Managers are concerned; they have a similar proportion of moderate morale bearing Branch Managers. However, low morale bearing Branch Managers are predominant in urban, semi urban and rural bank Branch Managers under study. From the one way ANOVA statistical test it is proved that there is significant difference between the Branch Managers of metropolitan, urban, semi-urban and rural center in
experiencing employee morale level. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups was quite medium.

3. In the case of metropolitan centre Branch Managers, high occupational stress and low employee morale are strongly correlated. It suggests that a high occupational stress is likely to dampen the employee morale in metropolitan bank center or vice versa. In the case of urban center Bank branches, high occupational stress and low employee morale are moderately correlated to each other. It explains that the Branch Managers experiencing high occupational stress in the urban center bank under study will show low morale or vice versa. In the case of semi urban center Branch Managers, high occupational stress and low employee morale are strongly related. The strong and positive correlation between high occupational stress and low employee morale suggests that a high occupational stress is likely to dampen the employee morale in semi urban center bank or vice versa. In the case of rural center banks establishes that high occupational stress and low employee morale are strongly and positively associated. This strong and positive association itself reveals that high job stress will lead to low employee morale. Thus, the results pertaining to the rural center banks under study reveal that job stress has an adverse effect on the morale of Branch Managers.

4. Karl Pearson’s Coefficient of Correlation has been put to use for finding the relationship between occupational stress and employee morale. While taking into consideration the overall banking sector, it has been found that occupational stress has shown a statistically significant strong and positive correlation with low employee morale. It can be concluded that Branch Managers having occupational stress have shown low employee morale in the overall banking sector or vice versa. The correlation between occupational stress and low employee morale is also statistically significant and positive in the case of all the four bank centers taken individually, relatively strongest correlation being reflected in rural center banks followed by metropolitan, semi urban and urban center banks.
5. Sub variable-wise relationship analysis between occupational stress and employee morale reveals that all the ten sub variables of occupational stress, viz. Difficulties in managing people, Decision making, Persistent and Result oriented, Personality and Personal psychology, Inter role distance, Role expectation conflict, Personal Inadequacy, Role overload, Promotional policies and career growth and Customer focus have shown a statistically significant positive correlation with low employee morale in the overall banking sector. The coefficient of correlation results also reveal that inter role distance sub variable of occupational stress is strongly and positively related to low employee morale in the overall banking sector with the highest value of coefficient of correlation. It means that in the selected public sector bank, if Branch Managers face a conflict between the organization role and other roles, i.e., conflict due to inability of sharing time between the work demands and family demands, they will also exhibit lower employee morale.

6. In the metropolitan center banks under study, the correlation values reveal that Ineffective promotion policies and career growth sub variable of occupational stress is strongly and positively related to low employee morale with the highest value of coefficient of correlation. Of all the ten sub variables of occupational stress, nine sub variables, viz. Difficulties in managing people, Decision making, Persistent and Results oriented, Personality and Personal psychology, Inter role distance, Role expectation conflict, Personal Inadequacy, Promotional policies and career growth and Customer focused have shown a statistically significant positive correlation with low employee morale. One sub variable, viz. role overload has shown a statistically insignificant positive correlation with low employee morale.

7. In the case of selected urban center banks under study, Role overload sub variable is strongly and positively related to low employee morale with the highest value of coefficient of correlation. In this bank eight sub variables of occupational stress, viz. Difficulties in managing people, Decision making, Persistent and Results oriented, Inter role distance, Personal Inadequacy, Role
overload, Promotional policies and career growth and Customer focused have shown a statistically significant positive correlation with low employee morale.

8. In the case of semi urban center banks under study, Personal Inadequacy sub variable of occupational stress is strongly and positively related to low employee morale with the highest value of coefficient of correlation. In this bank the nine sub variables of occupational stress, viz. Difficulties in managing people, Decision making, Persistent and Result oriented, Personality and Personal psychology, Inter role distance, Role expectation conflict, Personal Inadequacy, Role overload and Promotional policies and career growth have shown a statistically significant strong and positive correlation with low employee morale.

9. A comparison among the selected metropolitan, urban, semi urban and rural enter banks brings out that occupational stress is most strongly and positively related to low employee morale in rural center banks followed by metropolitan, semi urban and urban center banks.

FINDINGS IN THE LIGHT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND STRESS COPING STRATEGIES:

1. One way ANOVA method was used to explore the variation in the coping styles among the respondents of the four bank centers. The analysis revealed that except the strategy ‘Distraction techniques (DT)’, there is no significant difference in the coping style adopted by the respondents across the four bank centers. Hence, it is clear that bank Branch Managers of different bank centers adopt similar coping strategies to mange stress.

2. Karl Pearson correlation analysis was used to study the relationship between occupational stressors and coping strategies of respondents. The results indicates that correlation coefficients between the stressors and coping strategies are low for almost all the seven coping strategies which states that there exist no relationship between stressors and coping strategies. When the analysis was made bank center wise, a similar result was observed, which
shows that these two are independent. In other words, Branch Managers of public sector banks preferred coping styles of their own disregarding the level of occupational stress.

3. Multiple regression analysis was used to explore the impact of stressors on coping strategies. It was observed that coping styles were not influenced by the stressors for all the respondents. Thus it indicates that employees' coping styles remain same disregarding the high or Low level of stress. Hence, it could be safely concluded that stressors and coping strategies are independent.

4. Ranking of coping strategies was computed on the basis of mean scores obtained, the scores of the respondents indicate that, a Utilization of Home resource (UHR) is the strategy which most of the respondents preferred. It is followed by the other strategies, Relaxation Technique (RT), Strategies for preparation (SOP), Distraction techniques (DT) and Emotional relief (ER). On the other hand, rational task oriented behaviour (RTOB) and Passive Attempts (PA) are the least preferred coping strategies in the opinion of the respondents as a whole.

5. The 20 items of the coping strategies adopted by the branch bank managers were subjected to factor analysis using SPSS. The two-component solutions explained a total of 51.56% of the variance, with Component 1 contributing 36.33% and Component 2 contributing 15.23%. Component 1 named as expeditious strategy and component 2 named as cautious strategy.
SUGGESTIONS

While some workplace stress is normal, excessive stress can interfere with manager's productivity and impact their physical and emotional health. Their ability to deal with it can mean the difference between success and failure. They can't control everything in work environment, but that doesn't mean they are powerless even when they are stuck in a difficult situation. Finding ways to manage workplace stress isn't about making huge changes or rethinking career ambitions, but rather about focusing on the one thing that's always within their control. The following recommendations can be made on the basis of this study to reduce the prevalent levels of occupational stress.

1. Keeping in view the moderate level of occupational stress experienced by the public sector bank branch manager's under study, it is recommended that in order to eliminate occupational stress, it is required that manager needs to create a positive environment that foster acceptance and tolerance. It is also suggested that managers should be allowed fair 'own' time for family and personal errands to reduce stress. Structuring work processes to be customer-friendly and responsive can also help to curtail stress. Also, it is advisable to hold subordinate managers and supervisors accountable for bottom-line results.

2. As the highest level of occupational stress is found to be experienced by Branch Managers working in the metropolitan center banks under study, it is suggested that banks from this center should ensure that Branch Managers have lesser working hours, shorter board room meeting and less commuting time. And also strategic thinkers need to be very careful when bank Branch Managers are supposed to execute ambitious capacity expansion and modernization plans.

3. Rural Branch Managers are experiencing low morale than other categories due to branch manager in the rural center cannot expect full support from his staff either and lack of competent staff members. It is recommended that through 'professional manpower planning' top management should be well provided for adequate competent staff members to ensure better employee morale. Also,
it should be ensured that the managers are satisfied with their superior’s traits and decisions for better employee morale.

4. Since female Branch Managers are experiencing high level of occupational stress than male Branch Managers. The chief stressor for female bank Branch Managers is found to be customer focused. It is, therefore, suggested that in order to reduce the level of occupational stress among female Branch Managers, needs to create a branch environment that is highly personal, distinctive, interactive and satisfying for customers and teaches others to do the same. She should meet with frontline people to discuss how to be more supportive of their efforts.

5. Inter role distance is the main stressor causing stress among Branch Managers in banking sector. It is suggested that branch manager needs to reduce conflict between self concept and expectations and the role as perceived by the role occupants. In the present study, inter-role distance was found at a high level. It could be argued that if Branch Managers had the autonomy to take decision for different activities and tasks, they would be doing something different than what they currently do.

6. There are different types of occupational stressors which have been found to be causing stress. Customer focused is one of the main stressor causing stress among Branch Managers in banking sector. It is suggested that branch manager needs to make high-quality decisions based on a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience and judgment and take the time needed to build a solid business case for important decisions. Managers must Empowers employees to make appropriate on-the-spot decisions and delegates effectively.

7. Another stressor causing stress is found to be Persistent and result oriented. It is highly recommended that Branch Managers needs to Press to expedite action and meet deadlines and financial targets. Managers should take action to meet and exceed expectations. Hold subordinate managers and supervisors accountable for bottom-line results. He/she must commit to continuous improvement through empowerment and management by data.
8. In the banking sector another major stressor causing occupational stress among Branch Managers is difficulty in managing people. Branch Managers should make his/her performance expectations clear, and holds others accountable for meeting challenging work standards for production, accuracy and completion. Also needs to create a positive environment that fosters acceptance and tolerance, and in which all employees work hard, contribute ideas and feel free to ask for help. To reduce occupational stress, Model how to build and maintain positive working relationships; create a strong feeling of belonging and cohesion within the branch to enhance stress free work.

9. Since Frequently alcohol consuming Branch Managers are reel under occupational stress, Alcohol temporarily reduces anxiety and worry, but too much can cause anxiety as it wears off. Drinking to relieve occupational stress may also eventually lead to alcohol abuse and dependence. Similarly, smoking, when managers feeling stressed and overwhelmed may seem calming, but nicotine is a powerful stimulant – leading to higher levels of occupational stress. Not only can stress and worry cause insomnia, but lack of sleep can leave Branch Managers vulnerable to more stress. When managers well-rested, it’s much easier to keep his/her emotional balance, a key factor in coping with occupational stress. So managers must try to improve the quality of their sleep by keeping a sleep schedule and aiming for 8 hours a night.

10. Branch Managers who have more number of companions and frequent sharing their feelings with family and friends are less vulnerable to occupational stress. It is recommended that Close relationships are vital in helping Branch Managers through times of stress so reach out to family and friends. Simply sharing the feelings of managers face to face with another person can help relieve some of the stress. Accepting support is not a sign of weakness and it won’t mean managers a burden to others. In fact, most friends will be flattered that you trust them enough to confide in them, and it will only strengthen your bond.
11. Effective Communication plays a vital role in stress free environment in the organization. So it’s the duty of Branch Managers to maintain open communication channel and share information with employees to reduce uncertainty about their jobs and future. Managers need to provide role clarity by clearly defining employees’ roles and responsibilities. Also make communication friendly and efficient, not mean-spirited or petty.

12. The various coping mechanisms and techniques advocated by the respondents are that the organizations should provide an open environment and share in the decision making process when ever required. The adequate training to the Branch Managers should be a regular feature in the organization along with other stress-relievers like improving diet of managers, exercise, yoga, meditation etc. Employees should be equipped with the powers to utilize the financial and other resources of the organization up to a certain level freely whenever they are required. The employees should be given a free holiday package with their families, so that they can rejuvenate their energy level when they come back to the work.

13. Identification of factors leading to stress is not so easy for all. Hence it is suggested that external counselors may be appointed to identify the problems faced by the employees who could result in stress and take steps to reduce such stress. It has been scientifically proved that yoga; meditation and physical exercise will release stress. Hence, it is suggested that the organization arranges proper training programs on yoga, meditation and physical exercise for Branch Managers. Proper training program on stress management must be organized in order to create confidence in the minds of the managers to face the situation and handle problems independently.

14. Compensation at branch manager level has to be gradually moved closer to market to attract and retain talent. Movement towards variable performance linked salaries has to be expedited. Banks with better overall performance need to be allowed higher levels of incentive distribution.
15. Exercise is one of the best ways of combating stress. It releases Beta Endorphins, which make a person feel happy. At the same time, it also burns the excess blood sugar and fatty acids and prevents long-term diseases. Exercise needs to be complimented with a nutritious diet. Meditation also helps as it strengthens the mind. Regular sleep and taking some time out for family and friends is also a must.

16. Flexibility in coping strategies can be very useful in stress management. Instead of keeping the same strategy disregarding the quantum of stress trying different styles at different situations appropriately may provide more relaxation. Improving the ability both physically and psychologically, besides choosing the right coping strategy according to the demand may also result in pleasant and positive outcomes.
CONCLUSIONS

To conclude the study, it can be stated that the prevalent level of Occupational Stress and employee morale is not at the ideal state. There are a number of individual and organizational factors that cause stress among the Branch Managers of public sector banks in northern districts of Tamilnadu, which has a moderate level and huge impact on the Branch Managers’ efficiency. These factors are present in all the centers, but more in the metropolitan centers as they engage in long hours in board room meeting and spend long hours in commuting particularly in these centers. These stressors could be managed well through a proper and scheduled manner. There are number of techniques available to address this problem as listed above. But the use of these will depend upon the situation and the nature of the work environment.

Difference in stress level may be attributed to various causes or reasons. It is pertinent on the part of the organizational heads of the public sector to identify the major organizational stressors and find ways to mitigate its harmful effects to the extent possible. Proper coping strategies must be adopted at individual and organizational level to mitigate the negative impacts of stress on employees.

It is earnestly hoped that the current research findings and recommendations provide food for thought and further research that ultimately prompts the banks to frame human resource policies conducive to lower levels of occupational stress and higher levels of employee morale amounting to more efficient and productive bank Branch Managers, ultimately benefiting employees, employer, banks customers and society at large.
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like every research work, the present study also has certain limitations. Some of these are explained as under:

Firstly, the moderate sample size taken for the study makes the power of the test generally weak. But acknowledging the constraints of time and money as well, the research design was kept pragmatically relevant to the aims of the study.

Secondly, the findings were based on the adoption of questionnaire method which may have been affected by false information reporting by the respondent employees. However, since the questionnaires were anonymous and it was specifically conveyed in writing as well as in person to the respondent managers that the data pertaining to their response would be used purely for academic research purposes, there is no substantial reason as to doubt the findings thus obtained.

Thirdly, the Study was based upon Respondent’s feelings, emotions, and attitudes at the time of the Survey, which may not be generalized over a period of time.

Fourth, Sample Size has to keep in mind practical constraints. Therefore, a large Sample could not be feasible due to time and budget constraints of an Individual Researcher.
SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is based on non-financial data, but the inclusion of some financial data such as the net income of banks, turnover costs, health costs, etc. in relation to Occupational stress and employee morale will further extend the scope of research.

Study of occupational stress and employee morale has been covered in this research but for a full fledged empirical research incorporating other significant facets, such as its relation with divorce rate, family discord, substance abuse, etc.

The study of disparity in occupational stress and employee morale in the context of age, experience, marital status and qualification may also be a prolific area for further research.

The present study is confined to just public sector banks in Northern Districts of Tamilnadu. More empirical researches with larger samples drawn from a wider geographical area might prove more useful. If those studies confirm the current research results, it would most certainly pave the way for broader generalizations of the findings of this study.