ABSTRACT

Occupational stress has gradually captured the attention of both researchers and practitioners especially in developed countries. Stress is any force that pushes a mental or physical factor ahead of its range of stability, producing a strain within the individual. Banking psychology is concerned with the study of human behavior in those aspects of life that relate to the financial crisis, new technologies, new policies, customer satisfaction, accepting and safeguarding of public money and lending it to others for a surplus profit. Now banking has broader areas of operations, such as business of trading information related to customers, money, market and risk-reducing. Stress at work can happen to anyone in any position in the Banking sector. Stress can affect employees at various levels with different problems. These problems affect organizational performance by causing low productivity and high turnover of staff. The present study focuses on a factor that causes stress for employees in the banking sector and strategies adopted by banks for coping with stress and to improve employee performance and ensure job satisfaction.

The primary aim of the study is to investigate the impact of stress and coping strategies on employee performance and job satisfaction in public sector banks. Based on the review of literature, the research gap has been identified and a conceptual model was developed with the following objectives and hypotheses are framed to examine the impact of stress and coping strategies for improving employee performance and job satisfaction in public sector banks. As a first step, literatures related to the research questions were collected. From literature, an depth knowledge about public sector bank employees and the various dimensions of stress among the employees in
public sector banks were gathered. The literature survey helped the development of the instrument for the study.

Prior to checking the content validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted. A pilot study was carried out among 38 respondents for finding the appropriateness of the instrument with the help of a semi-structured questionnaire framed by the researcher. Based on the feedback from the respondents, some questions were eliminated and some were added and a structured questionnaire was prepared. The outcome of the pilot study revealed and reliability of the instrument used in this study to gather authentic responses from the respondents. Hence, it is concluded that the instrument used in this study will obtain the necessary data required from the respondents.

The research design chosen for the study is mainly descriptive. A multistage sampling technique was adopted to select the samples. Multistage sampling refers to sampling plans where the respondent is selected using smaller sampling units at each stage. Sample size for the study is 1315 respondents, of whom 460 were from State Bank of India, 435 from Punjab National Bank and 420 from Bank of Baroda. The data were used for analysis after avoiding bias and non-responsive questionnaires.

In this study, statistical tools like multiple regression and reliability test were used. The data collected was organized, classified and analyzed using a wide range of appropriate statistical tools like Mean Score, Chi-Square, ANOVA, Post Hoc Test, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Multiple Regression and Correlation using Statistical Package for Social Sciences and Structural Equation Modeling using AMOS package. The findings, suggestions and conclusion have been on the basis of interpretations.

The Major findings of the study are;
Percentage analysis has been used for analyzing the frequency distribution of the sample against demographic factors such as Gender, Age, Marital status, Educational Qualification, Designation and Income of the respondents. Percentage analysis has been used for analyzing the frequency distribution of the respondents based on factors involved in occupational stress.

Multiple regression analysis indicated some of the dimensions of Occupational Stress and coping strategies having considerable impact on the variables of employee performance and Job satisfaction.

Further factor analysis was carried out, to analyze the causes of occupational stress among middle level employees in all the three banks. The findings of the study reveal the feelings of the respondents that they have excessive and inconvenient working hours in the bank due to the absence of sufficient staff to provide adequate services. They also feel that, they were working under tight deadlines which cause enormous stress.

The structural measurement model of job stress and coping strategies adopted by banks to enhance employee performance and job satisfaction comprises of 13 dimensions. In all the three banks, coping strategies were found leading to job satisfaction and improvement in the performance of the employees.

There are a number of factors causing occupational stress among employees in public sector banks. Management of stress depends on the culture in the organization. In this study, the factors causing stress have been identified and suitable coping strategies suggested for implementation. This in turn increases employee performance and job satisfaction. The banks can encourage productive stress by helping employees to face challenges and assume additional responsibilities and over time.