

Job & Family Related Stressors among Bank Branch Managers in India

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The present study is conducted on a sample of 316 bank branch managers of both public and private sector banks to identify the various job and family related factors which cause stress among them. The correlation analysis reveals that health is associated positively and significantly with 'Highly Intricate job', Performance Constraints and Pressures', 'Insufficient Training and Career Planning', 'Unproductive Meetings', 'Unwanted Criticism', 'Lot of Travelling and Transfers', 'Inadequate Office Space and Improper Layout', 'Corruption', 'Surveillance Required', 'Limited Opportunities for Growth', 'Lack of Authority', 'Family Obligations', and 'Lack of time or Family and Personal Care'.

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Introduction

Stress now a days is becoming a lethal agent engulfing various sections of the modern world. The tough challenges of globalization, technological advancements, economic deregulation, increasing competition, corporate reorganizations, relocation of personnel, redesigning of jobs, re-allocation of roles and responsibilities, rising employee needs and aspirations, pressures of meeting deadlines, increasing job insecurities, uncertainty of future and weakened social support are becoming the pervading features of a stressful world. The instinct of being winners at the global level is making the lives of employees of all the service sectors diversely demanding and is leading towards a self killing process. Banking sector is also one such sector which is traversing a period of major changes forcing the managements of these organizations to introduce cost cutting and productivity improving strategies (ILO 2001).

It has been reported that the business per employee in the traditional banks (public sector and old private sector banks) has increased from Rs.75.28 lakhs to Rs.549.21 lakhs while in the modern

banks (foreign and new private sector banks) the increase is from Rs.397.50 lakhs to Rs. 1216.76 lakhs during 1997 to 2008. Simultaneously, profit per employee has increased from Rs.0.57 lakhs to Rs.3.87 lakhs in traditional banks and in the modern banks it has increased from Rs.6.58 lakhs to Rs.17.74 lakhs during this period (Kumar & Sreeramulu 2007). These figures highlight the demanding role of employees working in the banking sector which necessitates the bank branch managers to carry out more significant and challenging roles in comparison to the managers of yesteryears. As a result, the bank branch managers experience extreme stress at work and suffer from different kinds of health problems, such as; frustration, anxiety, depression, mental disorders, migraine, sleeping problems, hypertension, coronary heart diseases, higher cholesterol level, artery blockages, severe heart attacks, increased uric acid, ulcers, and cancer, etc. They are, thus, compelled to retire prematurely much before they get an opportunity to fully actualize their potential in active organizational life (Toivanen et. al. 1993, Smith et. al. 1999)

Stress experienced by employees in financial sector varies from mild to severe and so does its impact on their health.

Stress is defined as an individual's state of mind in an encounter of a demanding situation or any constraint in the organization which s/he feels harmful or threatening for her/himself. Stress emerges from various energy seeping conditions in

the working environment. Stress experienced by employees in financial sector varies from mild to severe and so does its impact on their health (Edward et. al. 1987, Bowles & Lewis 1988, Singh & Singh 1992, Frone 2000, Cheng et.al. 2001, Broadbridge 2002, Domenighetti et. al. 2004, Krantz et. al. 2005, Michailidis & Yiota 2005, Oloyede DO 2006, and Kawada & Ooyaiscomfort 2009). Lot of research work has been carried out to identify various types of stressors and associated health implications across various groups of professionals. The present study is an attempt to identify the various job and family related stressors among bank branch managers and associated health implications.

Research Methodology

The universe of the study consists of all the bank branch managers of top twenty five Indian banks based on KPMG Survey, 2007. Out of these, only the banks having at least one branch in Punjab were selected for the study. Further, branches which were operating at district head quarters excluding branches opened in the premises of various organizations, such as schools, colleges and hospitals etc., were selected for the purpose of the study. The banks selected for the study included: HDFC, ICICI, Standard Chartered Bank, UTI/Axis Bank, HSBC, Corporation Bank, State Bank of Hyderabad, Indian Overseas Bank, Allahabad Bank Citi Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Federal Bank, Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank, IDBI Bank, ABN AMRO, State Bank of India, Union Bank Of India, Andhra Bank,

Indian Bank, Syndicate Bank, Bank of Baroda, State Bank of Patiala, Bank of India, State Bank of Travancore. In total there were around 643 branches of selected banks operating in Punjab at all district headquarters. All the 643 bank branch managers were considered for the study but only 316 responded and completed the questionnaire.

The first section of the questionnaire was designed to identify the stressors and another one to assess various health strains. The final draft of the questionnaire consisted of 64 items including 57 items representing various job characteristics and 7 items representing family related factors. The respondents were asked to indicate the level of their agreement about the given statements on a five point scale varying from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Similarly, the section designed to examine the status of health consisted of twenty five items. The scale consists of 12 physical health indicators such as; Headache, Skin Rashes, High Blood Pressure, Low Blood Pressure, Backache, Uric Acid, Diabetes, Nephache, Upset Stomach, Joint Pains, High Cholesterol Level, Physical Weakness. The mental health indicators are taken from standardized twelve item General Health Scale of David and Goldberg (1978). In addition to original twelve items, one more item related to 'sleep disorder' was added. The respondents were asked to indicate how often they experience the given problems on a five point scale varying from 'Always' to 'Never'.

Data Analysis

Factor analysis was employed to condense the large number of statements into a few meaningful interpretable factors. Factors with eigen values greater than one were extracted through principal component method and varimax rotation. Factor analysis of 57 job related items and 7 family related items separately identified 18 and 2 items respectively with insignificant and multiple loadings and were thus excluded from the analysis. The factor loadings greater than or equal to 0.35 (ignoring sign) have been interpreted. Alpha for 39 job related item construct was found to be 0.86 and that of 5 family related item construct was 0.52. To examine the health status of managers the total score has been calculated for 25 statements and Alpha for the given scale was found to be 0.76. Correlation analysis has been employed to identify the association between job and family related health factors of the bank branch managers.

Results & Discussion

The factor analysis of 39 job related factors generated eleven factors which explained 63 percent of the total variance. Eigen values of the factors extracted are; 7.51, 3.50, 2.13, 2.03, 1.67, 1.54, 1.41, 1.26, 1.15, 1.03, and 1.0, respectively. The factor structure and respective loadings of variables defining these factors are reported in Table 1.

Highly Intricate Job (F₁)

The diverse set of responsibilities of the bank branch managers such as, se-

Table 1: Structure of Job & Family Related Factors with Their Loadings

Highly Intricate Job		
Labels	Variables	Loadings
S45	We have to be very alert all the time to prevent a robbery and other such incidents in the branch.	.80
S43	Technological advancements have added new dimensions to my job, resulting into increased work load.	.71
S38	Staff available is not sufficient to provide quality customer service	.67
S41	It is practically very difficult to follow all the guidelines issued by RBI and the government.	.67
S56	I have to work even during holidays.	.62
S46	I have to work in my office till late in the evening to finish my work for the day.	.62
S57	Police enquiries in case of a robbery or a fraud cause a lot of harassment.	.59
S33	I am not empowered to initiate action against any subordinate even on a genuine complaint against that subordinate.	.52
S35	Politics play an important role in number of decisions such as promotion, transfers, allocation of resources and delegation of powers in our bank.	.50
Performance Constraints and Pressures		
S9	I have to go through a lot of official circulars every day.	.74
S15	Most of my office time is lost in making and attending telephone calls.	.73
S16	There is a lot of pressure to have more and more low cost deposits	.68
S11	Customers do not tolerate any delay in service whatever may be the reason.	.63
S14	Our bank set unreasonable targets for us to achieve.	.61
S10	Customers now a day are very prompt in complaining to higher authorities/ consumer courts if there is any deficiency in service.	.60
S19	I receive phone calls regarding office matters even after office hours.	.55
	Insufficient Training and Career Planning	
S27	I have not been provided sufficient training to discharge my duties properly.	.77
S51	I don't have clear career plans and I am not progressing accordingly.	.75
S55	Our staff is not properly trained to use bank software and other instruments.	.73
S54	My salary and other monetary benefits are not sufficient to fulfill my personal and my family needs.	.43
Frequent Meetings		
S44	Meetings consume lot of my productive time.	.60
S48	Higher authorities press upon me to take action against defaulters which may be a threat to my life	.55
S53	Meetings are generally very boring and inconclusive.	.53
S36	Decision-making in our bank is centralized and concerned people are not involved while taking decisions affecting them are made.	.49
Unwanted Criticism		
S26	Staff of my branch is always critical of my style of working.	.73
S31	I am held responsible by the staff for any kind of injustice done to them by the higher authorities.	.57
S23	Staff politics prevailing in the branch, affects the quality of service provided by us.	.48

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Lot of Traveling and Transfers		
S50	I have to travel a lot regarding office work.	.70
S37	I am being transferred frequently.	.65
S52	Having knowledge and understanding of each and every product/service being offered by your bank is making our job harder.	.52
Inadequate office Space and Improper Layout		
S4	Office space is very congested which adversely affects the performance of the employee.	.83
S2	Office layout does not support the operations being performed by the employees which adversely affects their performance.	.76
Corruption		
S47	Corruption prevailing at lower level is a serious cause of concern for me.	.72
S34	There is an increasing pressure on me to ensure the higher percentage of recovery of loan	.55
S8	I lack the proper opportunities to advance in this bank.	.48
Surveillance Required		
S18	There is always a possibility of signing a wrong document as I have to sign lot of documents everyday.	.83
S17	It is very difficult to ensure the authenticity of information submitted by the customer.	.77
Limited Opportunities for Growth		
S21	I have few opportunities to grow and learn new knowledge and skills in my job	.76
Lack of Authority		
S13	I lack the authority to carry out my job responsibilities	.58
Family Obligations		
S59	If there is any problem related with the maintenance of my house, it is my responsibility to get it repaired.	.78
S58	I have to take care of my wife and dependent parents.	.64
S62	I myself manage my household finances and keep accounts of the same.	.62
Lack of Time for Family and Personal Care		
S61	I do not have enough time to spend with my family and my friends.	.84
S64	I do not get time to take care of myself.	.81

curity of the branch, maintenance of technological infrastructure, addressing variety of complaints of customers as well as of the staff, following the varied guidelines issued by the government and RBI and work overload has made the job

highly complex and demanding in nature which may be causing stress among them. The rotated component matrix has revealed this as the most important factor which explains 11.93 percent of the total variance. Nine variables which have

been loaded on this factor indicate that the bank branch managers have perceived the diverse set of responsibilities without requisite staff and appropriate authority which makes their job highly intricate in nature and can be a source of stress for them. The findings of the study are in agreement with those of Karasek (1979), French and Colleagues (1982) and Smith et. al. (1999).

Performance Constraints & Pressures (F₂)

The ever increasing competition and added dimensions of job of branch managers are imposing resource constraints and mounting pressures for more productivity. Factor analysis has revealed performance constraints and pressures as another independent factor which explains 9.98 percent of the variance. All the seven variables loaded on this factor support the findings of the survey conducted on Australian bank employees which highlighted that fewer staff and increased work load (77%), high performance sales targets (76%) and increased business pressures (69%) are the most important changes affecting banking industry and its workers' lives over the last ten years (FSU 2002).

Insufficient Training & Career Planning (F₃)

Advancement in the field of technology have necessitated that the employees working in this sector must have thorough knowledge about the latest technology. But in reality, in the case of failure of technology each time the subordinate staff expects solution from the branch managers who

themselves may be lacking requisite knowledge and training. Thus, insufficient training has emerged as an independent stress factor that explains 5.68 percent of the variance. The variables comprising this factor support the findings of Cheng et.al. (2001) which identified that the individual's job content, monetary rewards and career prospects create stress among administrators or managers.

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Unproductive Meetings (F₄)

The rapidly changing socioeconomic as well as technological environment has forced new managerial teams to make monthly, weekly or even daily appraisals. For the said purpose a large number of meetings are conducted at different levels to respond to the emerging issues timely, accurately and appropriately. Conducting or attending meetings have also emerged as an independent factor which explains 5.02 percent of the variance. The factor reveals that unplanned and frequent meetings disturb the working hours of the managers and act as performance inhibitors leading to mounting work pressure and stress. The findings extend the theory where Salvo et. al. (1994) identified that performance inhibitors are associated with job stress.

Unwanted Criticism (F₅)

Unsupportive staff at the work place usually becomes the cause of frequent dis-

turbances and underachievement of performance targets and deadlines. It has emerged as an independent factor which explains 4.94 percent of the variance. The loading pattern of this factor reveals that taking support of the subordinate staff in performing duties is a big challenge for the branch managers that may lead to stress. The findings of the study are in agreement with those of Coetzee & Villiers (2010).

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Lot of Travelling & Transfers (F₆)

In today's competitive era employees have to travel a lot, in inconvenient conditions and during odd hours for the convenience of the customers. Further, they have also been transferred from one place to another from time to time, poses various problems for them and their families to make adjustments every time at each new place. Travelling and transfers has emerged as an independent factor which explains 4.64 percent of the variance. The variables loaded in this factor reveal that there is a lack of consistency in the job of the bank branch managers. The study supports the findings of the study conducted by Munton (1990) and Menon and Akhilesh (1994).

Inadequate Office Space & Improper Layout (F₇)

Generally banks are located in rented buildings, not meant specifically for bank-

ing purposes. The branch manager and the employee staff has to make adjustments according to the size and dimension of the building available to them. The factor analysis has identified inadequate office space and improper layout as an important factor which explains the 4.46 percent of the variance. The loading pattern of this factor supports the findings of studies conducted by Smith et. al., (1991) and Rajeshwari (1992)

Corruption (F₈)

Although, the banks are governed under strict rules and regulations, the scope of corruption cannot be overruled. Corruption has been identified as an independent factor which explains 4.22 percent of the variance. The loading pattern of the variables exhibits lack of control on the part of the branch managers which may lead to severe consequences and stress. The findings of the study are in consonance with the meta analysis conducted by Dowden and Tellier (2003).

Surveillance Required (F₉)

Banking business requires excessive surveillance because of the involvement of money. Even a small mistake can lead to serious consequences and can ruin the career of an employee. The need of excessive surveillance has appeared as an independent factor which explains 4.11 percent of the variance. The variables suggest that the branch manager has to remain alert and observant at all times to avoid any type of errors or mistakes committed at work place. The findings of the

study are in line with those of Lindstrom (1991).

Limited Opportunities for Growth (F₁₀)

‘Limited opportunities for growth’ is a single variable factor which explains 4.02 percent of the variance. The tight working schedules, downsizing and technology advancements may lead to such feelings and may lead to job stress also. The findings are in consonance with the findings of the study conducted by Peltzer, et. al. (2008) who has also identified that lack of career advancement in the job is related to stress among employees.

Lack of Authority (F₁₁)

Lack of authority has been revealed as another single variable factor. This suggests that insufficient authority is an independent and important dimension of the job of a bank branch manager. The finding is similar to those of Shah (2003), which identified inadequacy of authority as one factor among others, having potential to produce job stress.

Family Obligations (F₁₂)

Work and family are two inseparable domains of life of a person. The factor analysis of 5 statements yielded two factors which explain 57 percent of the variance. Eigen values for both the factors F12 and F13 are 1.63 and 1.22, respectively.

Family obligations have emerged as an independent factor which explains 28.80 percent of the variance. The load-

ing pattern shows that the non-compliance of household errands due to higher work responsibilities and demands or non compliance of work responsibilities due to family obligations may lead to work family conflict and may contribute to stress. The findings are supported by the studies conducted by Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1986) and Frone (2000).

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Lack of Time for Family & Personal Care (F₁₃)

Work and family conflict occurs when efforts and time needed to fulfil work role demand interfere with one’s ability to fulfil family demands and vice-versa. In the present scenario, due to work overload and performance pressures the branch managers work late hours and spend more time in office, thus leaving less time for family and self. Lack of time for Family and Personal Care has emerged as an independent factor explaining 28.23 percent of the variance. The loading pattern supports the findings of the study conducted by Brett and Stroh (2003) and Milliken and Dunn-Jensen (2004).

Health

In the present study the frequency of occurrence of different health related problems has been used as a criterion to assess the health of the respondents. The respondents were instructed to indicate the fre-

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of job and family related factors and Health

	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₅	F ₆	F ₇	F ₈	F ₉	F ₁₀	F ₁₁	F ₁₂	F ₁₃	H
F ₁	1.00													
F ₂	.58**	1.00												
F ₃	.16**	-.03	1.00											
F ₄	.41**	.22**	.30**	1.00										
F ₅	.37**	.21**	.17**	.34**	1.00									
F ₆	.18**	.07	.22**	.24**	.18**	1.00								
F ₇	.08	.03	.11*	.11*	.20**	-.04	1.00							
F ₈	-.07	-.07	.17**	.17**	.16**	-.03	.24**	1.00						
F ₉	-.04	-.10	.10	.08	.12*	.12*	.11*	.29**	1.00					
F ₁₀	.10	.16**	.01	.19**	.27**	.19**	.06	.18**	.11	1.00				
F ₁₁	.28**	.27**	.10	.28**	.24**	.17**	.16**	.08	.06	.28**	1.00			
F ₁₂	.34**	.17**	.05	.13*	.16**	-.02	.11*	.14*	-.05	.14*	.13*	1.00		
F ₁₃	.40**	.30**	.17**	.31**	.24**	.41**	.00	.03	.16**	.22**	.21**	.14**	1.00	
H	.63**	.57**	.26**	.33**	.43**	.29**	.09	.07	.15**	.24**	.30**	.34**	.50**	1.00

** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

quency with which they were suffering from the given problems on a five point scale ('Never', 'Rarely', 'Sometimes', 'Often', and 'Always') which were assigned weights 0,1,2,3, and 4 respectively. Low score is assumed to represent good health whereas higher score indicates poor health. The different health problems which have been found common among the respondents are; headache (mean = 2.9, $\sigma = .58$), upset stomach (mean = 2.68, $\sigma = .69$), physical weakness (mean = 2.61, $\sigma = 1.03$), high blood pressure (mean = 2.6, $\sigma = 1.08$), backache (mean = 2.53, $\sigma = .74$), joint pains (mean = 2.42, $\sigma = .84$), high cholesterol level (mean = 2.13, $\sigma = 1.16$) and neckache (mean = 2.1, $\sigma = .61$), feeling that one is playing useful part in things (mean = 3.75, $\sigma = .49$), feeling that one is capable of making decisions about things (mean = 3.73, $\sigma = .58$), one is able to concentrate on whatever one is doing (mean = 3.61, $\sigma = .73$), one is able to face up to one's problems (mean = 3.06, $\sigma = 1.05$), one is feeling reasonably happy all things

considered (mean = 2.86, $\sigma = 1.0$), one is able to enjoy one's normal day to day activities (mean = 2.82, $\sigma = .91$) and one felt constantly under strain (mean = 2.18, $\sigma = 1.08$). The results show that the health score of the respondents varies from 25 to 72 with mean 54.87 ($\sigma = 9.02$).

Relationship of Stress and Different Health Problems

To identify which of the job and family related factors are affecting the health of bank branch managers, correlation analysis has been employed. Table 2 reports correlation coefficients of job and family related factors (F₁ to F₁₃) and health of the respondents (H). An examination of the correlation matrix reveals that there exists several statistically significant correlations. All the job and family related factors have been found positively related with health, showing that higher the level of stress higher the frequency of occurrence of health problems. Health has been found

associated positively and significantly with 'highly intricate job' ($r = 0.63$), performance constraints and pressures' ($r = 0.57$), 'insufficient training and career planning' ($r = 0.26$), 'unproductive meetings' ($r = 0.33$), 'unwanted criticism' ($r = 0.43$), 'lot of traveling and transfers' ($r = 0.29$), 'inadequate office space and improper layout' ($r = 0.09$), 'corruption' ($r = 0.07$), 'surveillance required' ($r = 0.15$), 'limited opportunities for growth' ($r = 0.24$), 'lack of authority' ($r = 0.30$), 'family obligations' ($r = 0.34$), 'lack of time for family and personal care' ($r = 0.50$).

Conclusion

The job characteristics and family constraints are the significant stressors affecting the health of bank branch managers

The harmful physical and psychological effects of stress on individuals and organizations have been recognized, studied and widely documented across the world. Many studies have highlighted that these harmful effects, although are not mentioned in the budgets of the organizations, but are very costly for the individual employees, employer organizations and society in general. Thus, the most important research agenda among the industrial psychologists and researchers is to identify the causes of stress across different professions to save these unwanted costs and ultimately the health of employees. The present study have examined and identified that the job characteristics and family constraints are the significant stressors affecting the health of bank branch man-

agers. The findings of the study can provide guidelines to the industry in general and banking in particular in framing human resource policies and strategies that can address the causes of stress. The respondents' bias in their response to the questionnaire cannot be ruled out.

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