WORK STRESS IN BANKING SECTOR: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

In the cut throat competitive era, employers realized that employees are the only source of competitive advantage. Given the pressure to perform and compete, stress will be a natural concomitant. In today's competitive work environment, stress level is increasing among the employees. Banking industry which is the backbone of the country's economy is not an exceptional one. During the past decade, the Nepalese banking sector has under gone rapid and striking changes due to globalization and liberalization, increased competition due to the entrance of more private sector banks, introduction of new technologies, etc. Due to these changes, the employees in the banking sector are exposed to various pressures causing stress. The present research aims to study the stress faced by bank employees in both public and private sectors of Nepal and determine the factors causing stress.

Key words: Stress, Banking sector, Nepal, Factors of stress

INTRODUCTION

The banking industry is the most important constituent of the financial sector of any economy. Banking industry in Nepal has undergone massive changes over the last ten years. With the opening of the banking sector, public sector banks had to face fierce competition from private sector and foreign banks. It is in this context, banks understood that capital and technology are replicable but not human capital which is a valuable resource for achieving a competitive edge. The intense competition in introducing innovative products and services and to satisfy the divergent customer needs has created more demand and pressures on employees thereby increasing vulnerability to stress.

The stress contributes to decreased organizational performance, decreased employee overall performance, decreased quality of work,

high staff turnover, and absenteeism. If the employees are undergoing any kind of undue pressure or stress they will not be able to perform up to the mark. Hence lower will be the productivity & profitability of the banks and the result will be the lower contribution of the banking industry towards the economic growth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of various research studies provides various insights regarding factors of work stress and the level of work stress among employees of private and public sector banks.

Factors of Work Stress

Jadeja & Verma (2016) conducted a study which revealed that stress in work setting is caused from different sources like work overload, organization culture, performance pressure, lack of communication, job ambiguity, role conflict, lack of support and inadequate resources. Debus et al., (2015) investigated job stressor ratings through Lazarus' transactional stress theory and

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the usefulness of supervisor ratings as an alternative to employee self-reports. Based on the finding that negative affectivity (NA) causes incumbents to over-report job stressors, they hypothesized that supervisors may also be affected by their NA when assessing an incumbent's job stressors. Data from 260 incumbent-supervisor dyads showed that stressor observability reduced the impact of supervisor NA on supervisor ratings (but not the impact of incumbent NA on incumbent stressor ratings). The results emphasized the importance of personal and situational factors in the stressor appraisal process - an issue that advances both research and practice in the field of stressor ratings Nieuwenhuijsen et al., (2010) found that high job demands, low job control, low co-worker support, low supervisor support, low procedural justice, low relational justice and a high effortreward imbalance predicted the incidence of SRDs - Stress related disorders.

Various organizational related variables have been found to be the reason behind the workplace stress. Bhatti et al., (2010) found that out of the intra organizational and extra organizational causes of stress, 67 per cent of the overall stress experienced by the employees is due to factors within the organization whereby major cause of the stress is the workload. Time pressures, excessive demands, role conflicts, ergonomic deficiencies, job security and relationship with customers are particularly common stressors amongst employees in the financial services sector. In addition, new stressors such as computer breakdowns, computer slowdowns and electronic performance monitoring, have developed as a result of increased human interaction with computers. Bhatti et al., (2010) has classified stressors broadly into two main types-a) Extra-Organizational and b) Intra-Organizational Stressors. According to his study he predicted that the major causes of stress are firstly workload that causes 25% of stress, secondly timings that results 16% of stress, thirdly climate that results 11% of stress. According to (Anderson, 2002) work to family conflicts is also an antecedent to stress for employees of an organization. Eleven factors are used as antecedents of stress by researchers which are overload, role vagueness, role conflict, responsibility for people, participation, lack of feedback, keeping up with quick technological change, being in an innovative role, career growth, organizational structure and environment, and recent episodic events.

Caplan (1985) reported the factors like supervisory climate, co-workers, and time pressures, pressures for conformity which affect the mental and physical health of employees. Low control over the work environment, decreased participation in decision making about conditions of work, unpredictability of events, both too little and too much complexity in work, role ambiguity, and excessive workload, responsibility for persons, role conflict, and lack of social support are found to affect the well being of employees at the work place. With more exposure to these factors over a period of time, employees face more emotional and physiological trauma. Lack of participation in the decision making process, lack of effective consultation and communication, unjustified restrictions on behavior, office politics and no sense of belonging are identified as potential sources of stressors. Lack of participation in work activity is associated with negative psychological mood and behavioral responses, including escapist drinking and heavy smoking (Caplan et. al., 1975).

Stress in Banking Sector

Madan & Bajwa (2016) reported that employees working in banks face huge amount of stress specifically in private banks due to late working hours, superior-subordinate relationship, manager's attitude and financial rewards. The study by Dhankar, S. (2015) was undertaken to determine the level of stress experienced by the people and also to analyze the impact of various components of stress among the employees of 20 banks of Kurukshetra, Panipat, Sonipat and Karnal region. The results indicated that the private sector employees feel stress due to the role overload whereas the public sector employees feel more stress due to



unreasonable group and political pressure.

Biswakarma (2015) explored the existing Quality of Work Life in Nepal (QoWL). It also explored the relationship between the determinants of QoWL and satisfaction of QoWL among 200 employees working in different financial and non-financial institutions in Nepal. In general, the purpose of the study was to describe the level of satisfaction of QoWL and gain an understanding of difference of this phenomenon in financial and non-financial institutions in Nepal. Furthermore, the study also focused to hypothetical relationship between factors contributing to QoWL. The conceptual model developed by Laar and Easton (2012) was adopted, measured through WRQoL scale 2 (2013) in 5 point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha for overall scale was 0.82. It is found that employees working in non-financial sector are more satisfied with QoWL than employees working in financial sector in Nepal. It was found that the working conditions and employee engagement have strong relationship. It was also observed that the working conditions and employee engagement are congenial in non-financial sector in comparison with financial sector in Nepal and stress at work is lower in non-financial sector than that of financial sector in Nepal.

Selva Kumar and Immanuel (2015) conducted a study in the banking sector and found that employees in both the public and private sectors face moderate levels of stress, of which they are subject to role erosion the most and resource inadequacy the least. Further, there is no significant difference in total role stress among public and private sector employees. Although they noted that private sector employees are facing slightly more stress than those in the public sector. The research conducted by Tudu and Pathak (2014) among employees of private and public sector banks of Delhi, Noida and Gurgaon, metropolitan cities of India corroborates the existence of stress among employees of both private and public sector banks. The bank employees, both private and public sector, are experiencing moderate to high level of stress. Role stagnation (RS) emerged as the most potent role stressor in both the sectors followed by Inter Role Distance (IRD) and Role Erosion (RE). Ambiguity (RA) emerged as the least potent role stressor in both banks. However, on comparing the means of both the sectors it is observed that private bank employees experienced higher overall stress. This might be due to the nature of job these professionals perform.

A similar study was conducted by Ajay & Nidhi (2013). They studied organizational stress and coping mechanism in Public and private sectors. The sample included 260 employees from both the public sector and private sector banks in Delhi. The major findings were that among the different organizational stress factors, the organizational climate factor contributes more to the stress level in case of the public banks and inter role distance factor in case of private sector. There is a significance difference and thus relationship exists between employees working in the public and private sector bank with respect to some role stress factors such as inter role distance, role stagnation, role overload, self role distance, role ambiguity and resource inadequacy. Kayastha, et al., (2012) investigated a significant relationship between reported degrees of experienced stress, perceived stress factors, and personal characteristics of the employee, the computing environment (technical and managerial) and the employing organization. The study was based on a sample of 440 top level managers who were selected on the basis of random sampling from large scale industries and different organizations situated in and around various part of Nepal. The result from this study indicated that managers were experiencing high stress with role overload, role conflict, under participation, poor peer relation, strenuous working condition, intrinsic impoverishment.

Lakhwinder and Rashpal (2012) conducted a study which investigated the relationship between job and family related stressors and the physical and mental health of bank branch managers. A sample of 316 bank branch managers from public and private sector banks in the state of Punjab (India) was selected. The study revealed

that highly intricate nature of the job, lack of time for family and personal care, insufficient training and career uncertainties, performance constraints and pressures, surveillance required, unwanted criticism, travelling and transfers, and family obligations, have been affecting the physical and mental health of bank branch managers. Shahid et al., (2012) reported that six components of job stress: Lack of administrative support, excessive work demand, problematic customer, coworker's relationship, family & work life balance and riskyness of the job cause great stress in bankers and then decrease their performance.

Jamshed et al., (2011) reported that the workplace is potentially an important source of stress for bankers because of the amount of time they spent in their respective banks. And that stress often decreases their performance. Therefore occupation of individuals could be a major source of stress in the given circumstances. When individuals face stress due to various conditions of their occupation and fail to cope with stress, it results into burnout. Basically in banking sector lack of administrative support from boss(manager), work overload & time pressure, risky ness of job, poor relationship with customers & coworkers, and work family balance cause stress which in turns decrease employee performance. Malik (2011) conducted a study among a randomly selected sample of 200 employees from private and public banks. The study reported that occupational stress is found higher among private bank employees compared to public bank employees. Among different occupational stress variables role over load, role authority, role conflict and lack of senior level support contribute more to the occupational stress. Bank employees cannot afford the time to relax and "wind down" when they are faced with work variety, discrimination, favoritism, delegation and conflicting tasks.

In banking sector particularly higher management doesn't realize the impact of stress on employee performance which ultimately results in critical managerial dilemmas as Subha

and shakeel (2009) described higher level of stress existed with no managerial concern for solution consequently lowering the employee performance, staking organizational reputation and loss of skilled employees. These situations call for immediate concern from organization management for employing effective stress management practices to increase employee satisfaction and overall employee performance. In banks the poor relationship among employees often cause stress and have adverse effects on the performance of employees. Lack of social support from colleagues and poor interpersonal relationships can cause stress especially among employees with a high social need. Siw et al., (2008) highlighted the significance of exploring the relationship between work-family interaction and burnout over time. Their findings have shown bi-directional causal paths, i.e., both work family interaction and burnout may be either antecedent or outcome, resulting both loss and gain spirals as suggested by Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Shields (2006) suggested different sources of work stress do not occur in isolation but indeed interact with one another. Karatepe and Mehmet (2006) based on their studies reported that work-family conflict increased emotional exhaustion and decreased job satisfaction among the frontline bank employees.

In realizing the importance of executives in the organization, a study was conducted in the industry by Chand &Sethi (1997) to examine the organizational factors namely, role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, under participation, responsibility for, poor peer relation and strenuous working condition as predictors of job related stress. The study was conducted in a variety of nationalized banks, 150 executives (middle level officers) were selected through purposive and incidental sampling to represent functional areas like administration, general banking, savings, lending, general services, and auditing, accounting etc. The study reveals that role conflict was the strongest predictor of organizational stress. This was attributed to the factors like incompatible role pressures,

insufficient staff, meeting the annual target planned by higher authorities. Strenuous working conditions emerged as the second strongest predictor. Strenuous working conditions in banks arose due to risky and complicated assignments, necessity to work fast, lot of physical effort, excessive and inconvenient working hours and constantly working under tense circumstances. The study empirically demonstrated role conflict, strenuous working conditions and role overload to be clearest and significant predictors of job related stress. (Chand &Sethi 1997). Tsigilis, et al., (1994) expressed that there is negative relationship between job satisfaction and burnout reflecting that higher burnout results in lower job satisfaction and vice-versa.

Based on literature review various variables are identified that cause work stress.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to examine the work stress experienced by the employees working in public sector banks and private sector banks in Nepal. The research work has the following objectives:

- To scale down the theoretical determinants of work stress among bank employees into significant factors.
- To compare and analyze the level of work stress experienced by the employees working in public sector and private sector banks.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Hypothesis 1: Various variables are scaled down to significant factors of work stress.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the stress levels experienced by private sector bank employees and public sector bank employees.

METHODOLOGY

The population for the study comprised of the employees in private and public sector banks in Nepal. The sample includes 180 employees working in public and private banks in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. 80 employees are selected from public sector banks and remaining 100 from

private sector banks using convenience sampling. Questionnaire was developed and then administered to target sample respondents for the sake of collecting data for the study as a survey instrument. The survey instrument has two sections. Section one consist of demographic details of the respondents about gender, age, income, education, marital status, work experience in current organization, overall work experience, no. of dependents in the family, designation in the bank. Section two includes information about latent variables that are essential for the study. These variables consist of role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload and work-family conflict etc. This section of the study is developed based on the past literature. The questionnaire has 50 statements with five point scale e.g., 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. Cronbach's alpha of work stress was 0.850 indicating the reliability of the instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Various variables are scaled down to significant factors of work stress.

Hypothesis is tested by using factor analysis.

Factor analysis is a statistical technique of data reduction which deals with reducing the number of variables and to detect the structure in the relationships among the variables and classify these variables into factors basing on their relationships. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures sampling adequacy and the KMO measure is 0.762, which demonstrates that the sample is adequate for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test Sphericity is significant for the test (÷2 =2408.647, df =820, p < 0.000), which shows that correlations exist among the items. Moreover, factors having loadings greater than or equal to 0.30 (ignoring the signs) have been retained and the resulting solution yielded twelve interpretable factors. The scale is analyzed using principle component analysis with varimax rotation with the help of SPSS package.

Table 1: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eig	genvalues	2 2 - 22 - 22	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings					
1 (1)	Total	Total % of Variance		Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %			
1	9.045	22.061	% 22.061	3.447	8.408	8.408			
2	2.794	6.814	28.875	3.341 8.149		16.557			
3	2.130	5.195	34.070	3.301	8.051	24.608			
4	2.026	4.943	39.013	2.686	6.551	31.159			
5	1.833	4.472	43.485	2.246	5.477	36.637			
6	1.813	4.423	47.907	2.222	5.420	42.056			
7	1.606	3.918	51.825	1.927	4.701	46.757			
8	1.420	3.463	55.288	1.881	4.588	51.345			
9	1.283	3.130	58.418	1.718	4.190	55.535			
10	1.253	3.057	61.475	1.679	4.095	59.630			
11	1.135	2.768	64.243	1.582	3.859	63.489			
12	1.133	2.481	66.725	1.326	3.235	66.725			
13	.990	2.414	69.139	1.320	3.435	00.723			
14	.878	2.142	71.281						
15	.854	2.142	73.365						
16	.825	2.084	75.376						
	.749		227722222						
17		1.826	77.202						
18	.730	1.781	78.982						
19	.673	1.641	80.623						
20	.663	1.618	82.241		(F)				
21	.655	1.598	83.839	iP.					
22	.584	1.423	85.263			5			
23	.543	1.325	86.587			#.:			
24	.503	1.226	87.813						
25	.487	1.187	89.001		10				
26	.458	1.117	90.118	A.					
27	.429	1.047	91.165	8.	-				
28	.408	.995	92.161						
29	.378	.922	93.083		A _C *				
30	.347	.846	93.928						
31	.344	.840	94.768			50			
32	.314	.767	95.535						
33	.278	.678	96.214		S OF THE SECOND SECOND	N 2011 ELECT			
34	.275	.671	96.884						
35	.255	.621	97.505			*70			
36	.218	.532	98.038						
37	.197	.480	98.518						



38	.188	.458	98.976		
39	.174	.424	99.400		
40	.141	.344	99.743		
41	.105	.257	100.000		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Principal Factor Method (PFM) was applied to this study. Twelve factors are extracted whose

eigen value is greater than one and the twelve factors explain 66.725 variance.

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix

Factors	Component											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Time Management	010	.138	043	.221	106	.106	037	.715	041	176	128	029
More Working hours	037	.036	112	062	.243	063	010	.691	215	.179	.031	154
Tedious work culture	.086	186	.141	166	214	281	.002	.621	.168	.076	.227	.157
Satisfactory salary	068	.156	.043	.769	.068	085	.172	.072	.190	060	091	079
Satisfactory Compe- nsation Package	.197	.081	046	.848	.053	.119	063	087	098	.048	029	.085
Good Bonus and Incentives	.134	.114	.239	.728	.079	.065	.032	.089	040	.085	.137	.165
Job recognition	.235	.274	.270	.197	.115	.005	.208	.060	412	019	.351	234
Challenging job	.118	.499	.222	.151	.437	079	.025	.249	.152	132	056	.107
Good working condition	.414	.435	.186	.239	.145	.250	081	073	.109	044	.047	.008
Motivating reward	.501	.074	.507	.346	.177	.097	205	.022	054	.138	.150	.085
Good HR Practices	.587	.244	.301	.209	.088	.145	159	079	.120	.082	.262	.104
Encouraging prom- otion opportunity	.240	.386	.259	.089	.482	048	030	249	049	.176	.026	.001
Good Career devel- opment Opportunity	.163	.443	.152	.135	.556	.064	.030	104	.175	.187	.086	061
Good quality of work life	.364	.437	.088	.067	.282	.327	325	017	.014	.032	004	284
Convenient work place	.151	.199	040	.076	.053	110	002	063	.677	.058	.050	046
Flexibile work schedules	.665	019	009	.040	.175	047	.183	046	.174	107	057	112
Satisfactory paid vacation leave	.133	.000	.011	.116	.751	.139	.191	.071	037	082	.118	.231
Opportunities for learning new skill	.212	.194	.585	015	.495	092	.064	048	.089	092	061	.031



B	170	0.61	1.00	244	0.42	101	F20	010	044	205	005	.124
Participation in decision making	.173	.061	.163	.244	.042	.194	.530	.018	.044	285	095	.124
Good Superior encouragement	039	.099	.762	.052	.107	.096	.109	.058	079	009	.197	.132
freedom in job	.147	021	002	030	.157	.347	.721	098	.007	.023	024	065
Training opportunity	.537	051	.336	.116	.297	121	.219	.134	.053	029	090	.014
Fair Performance appraisal	.307	.172	.422	.331	.162	.076	.248	119	.037	.055	.352	.118
Team work	.658	.112	.245	.035	042	.023	.223	.031	052	.107	.118	.074
Continuous feedback	.275	.306	.462	.193	002	012	.482	027	112	.068	.022	123
Relations with Colleagues	.302	.349	.035	063	.135	.318	.340	.203	.304	.151	148	041
Clear responsibili- ties and target	.385	.237	.554	.106	.055	.055	029	.103	.262	105	192	032
Interesting Job	.369	.497	.324	.067	.024	013	.048	.040	.197	296	018	.229
Reward for performance	.039	.160	.119	013	.054	.016	103	.020	.062	005	.841	022
Job Accomplishment	031	.766	.221	.153	043	.032	.070	033	.099	.017	.151	029
Job satisfaction	.206	.567	.240	.296	.159	059	021	.030	078	048	.227	.078
Willingness to work	045	.521	094	101	.268	.029	.389	.270	.018	073	014	.221
Task overload	.125	153	196	017	.029	664	078	.114	282	.078	.006	.086
Role overload	018	.055	011	037	.058	710	155	.067	.301	.011	126	074
Roles Ambiguity	.129	035	139	.079	.161	.693	.186	.122	022	121	076	.284
Personal Growth	.051	.097	.131	.152	.159	.140	012	067	014	.084	019	.774
Recreation in Job	052	.101	.151	.080	059	301⁴	150	.138	508	.388	313	027
Quality time for Family	.121	.083	111	145	.107	.067	028	073	189	775	.156	039
Job Priority	.168	.003	200	078	.141	065	100	087	189	.661	.210	.064
Good counseling services	.237	.192	.608	.025	078	052	027	272	207	003	.072	046
Valued in organi- zation	.541	.419	162	.021	.112	.037	.047	050	224	090	.074	. 3 4 0

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

In case of few components, factor loadings are less. In case of five components, either the factor loadings are small or there are only one or

two factors with minimum factor loadings of less than 0.3. Hence seven factors out of twelve factors are considered.



Table 3: Factors identified based on Factor Loadings

Factors	Variables
I. Working hours	 I work more than agreed number of hours. Working hours are tedious in my organization I start and finish work on-time.
2. Compensation System	 Salary is satisfactory. Overall compensation package is satisfying. Bonus and incentives given by management are good Rewards offered by the management are motivating.
3. Intrinsic Factors	 The job is challenging and responsible. Promotion opportunities are encouraging. Workplace provides good career development opportunities. Overall quality of work life is good. I get support and encouragement from my colleagues. My job is interesting and meaningful. I feel a sense of accomplishment in my job. I am very satisfied with my job.
4. Empowerment	 Suggestions given are recognized by the superiors. There is freedom in doing the job. I am willing to put extra effort in order to help the organization become successful.
5. Development	 Training is given frequently in the organization. Appraisals are conducted in a fair and objective manner. Superior's encouragement for my development is good. Counseling services provided for employees are useful and good. Opportunities to learn new skills are encouraged. Expectations and targets are clearly communicated.
6. Role Overload	 I experience role overload. I feel that I am unable to do proper justice to all the roles equally. I often take work to home.
7. Time for himself and his family	 I take quick, short or no breaks during the day. My family members and friends complain that I don't have enough quality time for them. In order to get recognized in organization, employees must constantly put work ahead of their family or personal life.

Based on the factor analysis, various determinants are scaled down to seven major factors of work stress. Prolonged working hours, ineffective compensation system, lack of intrinsic factors, empowerment & development opportunities, role overload and inadequate time spent with the family cause stress among the bank employees.

Hypothesis 3 : There is no significant difference between stress level in public and private sector banks in Nepal.

The mean score of stress of employees of private sector banks is 3.373 which is slightly higher than mean score of stress of public sector banks (3.288). This is to some extent in line with the findings of Tudu and Pathak (2014) and Malik (2011) that occupational stress is found higher among private bank employees when compared to public bank employees. This might be due to the nature of job these professionals perform.

It is inferred from table 4 that t value is

Table 4: Relationship between Work Stress and Nature of Banks

Work stress	1	ne's Test for of variances	t-test for equality of means				
	F	Sig	Т	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Equal variances assumed Equal variances not assumed	1.130	.289	-1.314-1.304	176162.884	.190.194		

insignificant which reveals that there is no significant difference in stress level experienced by bank employees in private and public sector. The findings are in conformity with other research findings of Kumar and Immanuel (2015) who reported that there is no significant difference in stress among public and private sector employees. Although they noted that private sector employees are facing slightly more stress than those in the public sector. Though private sector employees are facing relatively slightly more stress, the employees in the public sector banks are also exposed to the stress. It may be due to the increasing work demands on public sector employees as the public sector banks are also under pressure in order to survive in this cut throat competition and be on par or even excel in services provided by the private sector banks.

CONCLUSION

In the recent times the banking sector has undergone sea changes due to globalization, liberalization and technological revolution. The cut throat competition brought in radical changes in work setting, nature of the job, work demands

etc. Given the pressure to perform and compete, stress will be a natural concomitant. The present study on work stress among employees in banking sector in Nepal reveals that bankers are under a great deal of pressure. Working hours, ineffective compensation system, lack of intrinsic factors, inadequate empowerment & insufficient development opportunities, role overload, inadequate time available for himself and his family are the major factors causing work stress for bank employees. It was also found that there is no significant difference in stress level experienced by bank employees in private and public sectors in Nepal.

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