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**WORK STRESS AND JOB PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF BANKING SECTOR IN
 BANGLADESH**

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ABSTRACT

Free flow of success is nothing but just a dream, as stress is the most unavoidable fact that each and every individual has to go through. In case of job performance, the dilemma of job stress is a common phenomenon as people are exposed to tension and anxiety. Overload, Role ambiguity, Role conflict, Responsibility for people, Participation, Lack of feedback, Keeping up with rapid technological change are some of the major antecedents of stress that every person working in an organization has to go through. Because of the strapping impact on job performance, job stress has become vital issue and key challenge for the employers and managers of the banks of Bangladesh. This research tries to uncover the roots and outcomes of job stress on employee performance in the banking sector.

Key words: Employee, job stress, job performance, workforce.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Banks play a major role in the economy of a nation. And their performance depends mostly upon the workforce. And tension, anxiety triggers to occupational stress of the workforce. Every person, organization and even every country around the globe is confronting to this serious issue. Stress is a state of problem responsible for creating a tensed and stiffed environment for the workers that not only generates tension, nervousness and physical disorders but also leads to diminished levels of their commitment, satisfaction, motivation as well as their work performance. In the words of Selye (1955), stress can be defined as “the force, pressure, or tension subjected upon an individual who resists these forces and attempt to uphold its true state.” The word “stress” was first used in physics and then it became the part of psychology. Hobfull (1989) defines this term as “when people starts to oppose external environment or forces also by following them”. Moreover, Keinan (1997) further defined that “The term stress refers to the interaction between the person and the environment”. Furthermore, Kahn and Byosiere (1992) explored job stress as frequent effect of role conflict, role ambiguity and work overload. Bedeianet. (1988) argued that work-family conflict also results in job stress. All these factors have always a negative impact on employees, psychologically and physically. As the

employees' behaviors are significantly affected by job stress now-a-days and organizational effectiveness and success depends mostly on the major role of them, it has been the growing concern of the employers and managers to solve this issue. Employees with a stress free environment are more productive and are treated as assets for an organization but when the organizations are not committed with their employees' stress, these results in increased absenteeism, turnover, work ineffectiveness and usually legal financial damages. McGrath (1976) defined job stress as a "condition in which employees are need to fulfill the duties that exceed the person's ability and the resources which are required to perform these duties, under the situation where there is a huge difference between rewards and the demand for fulfilling the duties". On the other hand, Selye (1956) pointed out that job stress does not always involve negative consequences; actually up to some extent it can improve employee's performance until it becomes an issue that needs proper attention. As such, Management decisions should be made upon consideration of the economic impact of job stress. This research paper is concentrated on fining out the rational motives for job stress and how to recover them through some possible suggestions and recommendations based on the key findings.

1.1. Research Hypothesis: To ensure employee effectiveness and efficiency for the maximum level of outcome in the organization through controlling job stress.

1.2. Problem Definition: To identify the limiting factors for job stress of the employees and the feasible scopes of improving their performances by minimizing such problem.

1.3. Research Scope: This research tries to find out the scope of enhancing performances of the employees by studying several banks of Bangladesh.

2. Methodology

Qualitative research has been conducted in this study to identify the issue and find out possible alternates to solve it. It has been done in general terms without mentioning any particular name of organizations to avoid corporate policy infringement.

3. Banking Sector in Bangladesh:

Banks play a key role in the service sector of Bangladesh and the wheels of economy mostly depends on them. Accordingly, bank's performance relies on the execution of duties of the employees. Studies have shown that employees working in a stress free environment are performing their jobs and responsibilities in a more meaningful way with satisfaction compared to those facing substantial amount of job stress. It is the most susceptible issue as there are a number of banks in the country but, the applicants for jobs are a lot more than the requirement. So, job security is a big concern for the employees. It is undoubtedly true that majority organizations are interested in uplifting the involvement level of their workforce, but there should be transparent relationship between the employer and the employee up to a certain level. Creating possible prospect for human resources to connect with their supervisors and peers in the organization can act as a bell-ringer. Continuous improvement, change and flexibility to adopt changes may reduce the stress. Managers strive to ensure superior performance, reduce staff turnover, improve the well - being of employees and treat this as competitive advantage in the highly competitive industry of banks.

4. Factors Behind Job Stress

4.1. Role Conflict: Incompatibility and conflict are unavoidable when there is human interaction. It can occur anywhere at any time, and the individual is required to manage the conflict wisely in order not to have a negative impact. According Tjosvold (1995), the basics of conflict can be divided into two types, the internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflicts are related to what is believed, principles or how individual handle life itself. External conflict occurs when dealing with other people and the environment. Rizzo (1972) argued that the causes of the conflict can be grouped into three broad categories: (a) the individual characteristics, such as, values, attitudes and beliefs, needs and personality, as well as the perceptions and opinions, (b) situational conditions which can encourage the emergence of conflict, the circumstances are interdependent, the need to interact with each other, the need for consensus, differences in status, communication, responsibility, and the regulations are ambiguous and (c) the complex factors in the group which can lead to conflict, namely the existence of specialization and differentiation of work, tasks are interdependent, the main goal to be achieved, scarce resources, authority and influence diverse, decisions, procedures and regulations.

Greenhaus and Beutell (2012), identified three dimensions of role conflict:

4.1.1. *Behavior-based conflict*- It may occur when there is a mismatch pattern of behavior desired by both roles. The indicators are responsibilities, expectations, duties and commitments to family and work.

4.1.2. *Time-based conflict*- It is visible when the time required executing one of the demands (family or job) can reduce the time to run the other demands. For instance, time and communication for family, time for work.

4.1.3. *Strain-based conflict*- Tension generated in the influential role on the implementation of other roles can create this conflict, such as, working pressure or pressure career, family pressure, determine priorities.

4.2. Work Stress

According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2005), stress is an adaptive response characteristic and connected by an individual or psychological process, which is a consequence of any external action, situation, or event that puts the demands of psychological / physical special to someone. Spielberger (Handoyo, 2001) refers stress as the external demands on a person, such as objects in the environment or a stimulus that is objectively dangerous. Stress is also commonly interpreted as pressure, tension or unpleasant disturbances originating from outside forces. If stress is considered as a positive impact, it can be fun because it can provide some sort of stimulation and motivation to solve a problem so as to achieve optimal results. But mostly in our country, it acts as a negative stimulus resulting adverse impacts to humans such as disruption of health, life, appearance, behavior, and attitudes. Superiors try to maintain a gap with the subordinates above the desired level and employees have less involvement in decision making and have less delegation of job. Moreover, they are continuously performing several kinds of responsibilities with fewer amounts of rewards and acknowledgements. In turn, this creates job stress.

Meanwhile, Sutherland and Cooper (1994) say that the source of job stress is derived directly from the employment and social interaction between the work environment, including: a. Job stress in the work itself such as, workload, lack of working facilities, long decision-making process. b. Role conflict, role in the work that is not clear, responsibility is not clear. c. Problems in relationships with others for example, the relationship with superiors, peers, and the pattern of superior and subordinate relationships. d. Career development: under / over - promotion, and safety. e. Climate and organizational structure f. The existence of a conflict between the demands of work with family demands.

5. Analysis & Recommendation

After studying the facts, it has been found that there is a negative correlation between work stress and job performance. For so, the following can be considered to stabilize employee performance:



Fig.1: Negative relation between work stress and job performance

Physical Environment-It is one of the most essential issues as the employees spent most of their time in the workplace. A healthy environment may result into reduction of stress and boost the performance.

Role ambiguity- Employees must be well aware of their job responsibilities and must be accountable for that.

Avoidance of overload-Though there are workload in a substantial amount, but it should be handled in a way considering the capacity of the individuals. To avoid overload, enough supply of workforce should be ensured.

Employee training-Proper training should be given both on the job and off the job, so that none of the employees have lack of knowledge about the job to be done. It will enhance confidence and in turn reduce the job stress.

Coworker relation-Coworker relationship is of great influence in the workplace. Peer relations can enhance mental strength and minimize the job stress.

Immediate Manager Working Relationship – To reduce stress in work and enhance the performance, the supervisors must impose substantial qualities and maintain transparent relationship with them so that they can share their views and ideas and actively perform for completion of the tasks laid upon them.

Fair Pay – Fair remuneration policy should be practiced which is market competitive and the members of the organization must be equally compensated and financial rewards should also be provided if possible according to the organization type for outstanding performances so that they can hold on to the belief that they will be compensated for the pressure and workload they are taking.

Rotation of Work-Job rotation is a must not only to avoid monotony, but to create assets (employees) with multiple skills.

Team Work- As banks are large organizations, teamwork and collaboration act as crucial ingredient for reducing job stress.

Job Security-It is the most vital indicator as individuals cannot be stress free if their job is not well secured.

Work-Family Balance- To maintain proper balance between work life and family life, paid leave should be provided and rather than late sitting to do the job done, in time service should be encouraged. It will facilitate to give enough time to the family and career will also lead to the green.

6. Conclusion

Nurturing the work performance of the employees by appropriate level of stress management is the only way to take competitive advantage in the corporate industry. Conflict management, sound environment, monetary benefits, work life balance is of the primary concern for the employers. Majority of the bankers have found their job full of stress due to overload, risky job and poor co-worker relations, time pressure to manage work life with family life resulting alarming social problems and these major contributors can only be minimized through effective strategic movement regarding working hours, interpersonal relationships and supervision of bankers to reduce stress and to better manage the performance of employees in banking sector. As the technological advancement has revolutionized the banking mechanism and the competition is globalised because of the economical conditions, employees should also be prepared to cop up with newer strategies for maintaining good physical and mental condition.

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