

## STRESS MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES AMONG BANKING SECTOR MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES IN THE BATTICALOA DISTRICT

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper examines the level of stress management competencies among banking sector managerial employees. Further, this study explores the level of effect personal factors on stress management competencies. The stress management competencies is measured using the dimension of respectful and responsible behavior, managing and communicating work, managing individual in a team and managing difficult situations.

The data is collected using questionnaires from 84 managerial employees who are randomly selected from the banks in the Batticaloa district. The data is analyzed using the statistical techniques of descriptive statistics, one sample t test, independent sample t test, ANOVA test, correlation and cross tabulation techniques.

The study found that the stress management competencies of managerial employees are high level in the bank. The dimension of respectful and responsible behavior, managing and communicating work and managing difficult situations are also fall in this level. And the managing individual in a team is very high level. The study also shows that there is strong positive impact on each other competencies.

Comparing personal profile of managers with their competencies shows that, female managerial staffs have significance competencies in managing difficult situation than male. Married employees have more respectful and responsible behavior than single. Joint family setting has more managerial competencies than separate. Age and experience have weak negative effect on the managerial competencies of people. Training time did not significant effect on the managerial competencies of staff. Income levels of managerial staffs have significance difference in stress management competencies. Further the type tasks involved, designation of managerial employees also have differences in stress management competencies. Hence, the special attention have to be taken by management in designing and implementing stress management training to enhance the stress management competencies of banking sector staff.

**Keywords:** Stress, Stress Management Competencies, Managerial Employees, Banking Sector

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The stress affects peoples' mental health and caused to mental and physical distress (WHO, 2012). In an organization perspective, stress has implications of this for employee productivity and organizational performance (Oke and Dawson, 2008). Ross stated that "work stress has the potential to affect the performance of all levels of staff, ranging from senior management to the young and newly employed" (1995). However, certain extent "stress may prove an asset as long as it is tolerable and helps in creating healthy competition" (Aravinthon and Velnampy, 2012). Karunanithy and Ambika (2013) ensured the negative relationship between stress and performance.

The term stress is defined as “pressure or tension exerted on a material object” or “a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances” (Oxford Dictionaries). Stress normally occurs when our brain recognizes a threat or unexpected event, consequently our body releases hormones that activates “fight or flight: response (Academic Skills Center, 2014). Hans Selye defined stress as “the force, pressure or strain exerted upon a material object or person which resist these forces and attempt to maintain its original state” (Karunanithy and Ambika, 2013, p 88).

The level of stress is varying person to person based on their personality and nature of living context. “Spector mentioned that personality variables play an important role in the understanding of a range of behaviors in the workplace” (Ross, 1995). A Japanese organizational psychiatrist Dr Osamu Fujita concluded his study as “stress-prone individuals share a number of traits, whether they are hard-driving Type-As or of another temperament. He also argues that how workers handle their own aggression is a factor in determining whether they will experience the kind of stress that can lead to heart attacks, high blood pressure and other health problems” (Janice, 1995).

In such circumstance, the stress management competencies of people are important to enhance individual well-being and organizational growth. According to Oke and Dawson (2008), employee experience of stress resulting from both individual characteristics as well as more collective qualities that are shaped by contextual factors of an organization. Further, they emphasized that more attention needs to be given to broader contextual issues such as history, culture and power relations at work in managing the conditions in which workplace stress is experienced. Therefore this study attempts to identify the level of stress management competencies in working context among the managerial employees in banking sector in Batticaloa District.

In case of banking sector, most of employees feel that their job is stress full. They suffer from work overload, lack of relationship with other co-workers and competitiveness in career development (Karunanithy and Ambika, 2013, P 94). Hence, this study intends to address the stress management competencies among managerial employees in commercial banks.

Workplace stress is an important issue for the organisations. Many people are affected by work-related stress, which causes to financial loss, loss of working days, depression, and anxiety (HSE, 2006). Treven and Potocan (2005) stated that humankind loses 100 million workdays every year due to stress.

In modern times, stress plays an important role for the successful or unsuccessful productive work activity, and in general in enjoying our lives. There are many factors causes for the work place job stress in an organization, such as setting unrealistic goals for work completion, number of hours work in a day, feeling of job insecurity, competing in the workplace for performance, external environment, interruptions (Rojas and Kleiner, 2000). Individuals vary considerably in their ability to manage stress based on self-perception, locus of

control, type A or B behavioural patterns and flexibility or rigidity, all appear to influence stress management abilities (Treven and Potocan, 2005).

Therefore this study raises the research problem as “what extent managerial employees have competencies to manage their stress among banks in the Batticaloa district?”

## 1. METHODOLOGY

The primary data is collected using questionnaires from 84 managerial employees who are randomly selected from the banks in the Batticaloa district. Responses are obtained in five point likert scale. The point one indicated the very dissatisfactory level while point 4 shows that satisfactory level and point five stand for very satisfactory level. The data is evaluated by the decision criteria of low, moderate, high level of stress management competencies based on the mean value of less than 2.5, between 2.5 to 3.499 and 3.5 and above 3.5 respectively.

The data is analyzed using the statistical techniques of descriptive statistics, one sample t test, independent sample t test, ANOVA test, correlation and cross tabulation techniques. Cross-tabulation technique is used to analyse data with categorical data. Independent sample t test is used to compare the means of two different samples, where as one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examines the differences between more than two independent samples (Aczel, Sounderpandian, 2006). The correlation analysis is used to measure the strength and the direction of the relationship between two variables (David, Timothy and Mark. 2007).

## 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The stress management competencies (overall) is measure by the dimension of respectful and responsible behavior, managing and communicating work, managing individual in a team and managing difficult situations. The univariate analysis and one sample t test revels that all the dimensions are at high level with significance level of 0.000 at the test value of 3.5, while managing individual in a team falls above satisfactory level with significance of 0.01 at the test value of 4.

*Table 1. Level of Stress Management Competencies and One-Sample Test*

Variable and Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed) at Test value of 3.5	Sig. (2-tailed) at Test value of 4
Respectful and responsible behavior	4.0644	.35798	.000	.103
Managing and communicating work	4.0921	.45680	.000	.068

Managing individual in a team	4.1931	.50968	.000	.001
Managing difficult situations	3.8922	.50438	.000	.053
Stress Management Competencies	4.0605	.40378	.000	.174

In order to find the effect of age, experience, number of training obtained on the stress management competencies and its dimension, Pearson correlation analysis is executed. The coefficient of correlation reveals that there is negative weak significance correlation between age and dimension of managing individual in a team, managing difficult situations and stress management competencies is -0.328, -0.228 and -0.217, significance at 0.05 respectively. Whereas correlation between experience and managing individual in a team, managing difficult situations and stress management competencies also shows weak negative coefficient i.e., -0.319, -0.286 and -0.243, significance at 0.05 respectively. This shows that the managerial employees are not adequately involve in developing their competencies. Further, it also found that the correlation between number of training obtained and stress management competencies have positive weak insignificance coefficient..

Independent sample T test is executed with categorical variable of gender, family type: joint/ separate, marital status and banking sector with stress management competencies and its dimensions. Gender shows that female staff have more competence in managing difficult situations, at the significance of 0.038. Family type shows that joint family have more stress management competency with its dimensions than separate, which is significance at 0.000. Marital status and banking sector are not show significance difference in stress management competency.

Further, the ANOVA test is taken to reveals the difference with the categorical variable of educational qualification, family size, designation, task involved and average monthly income. Educational qualification effects on the stress management competency at the significance of 0.03, where the master degree completed employees have more competency in the aspect of managing individual in a team and managing difficult situations at the significance 0.003 and 0.026 respectively. Next to this, graduates show the higher competency in stress management. The family size has only impact on the managing difficult situations, where family size of two recoded highest competency. Designation also did not reveal significance impact except managing difficult situations which is at the significance of 0.048, where lower grade officer show the higher competency in managing difficult situations.

ANOVA test depicts that task involved also influence on the competency of managing and communicating work and managing difficult situations with significance of 0.048 and 0.004 respectively. It shows that front counter and loan related task shows lowest competency than other task, whereas pawning task

shows the highest competency for stress management. In case of average monthly income, the ANOVA test shows that there is significance difference in stress management competency with significance of 0.000. And its all dimensions of respectful and responsible behavior, managing and communicating work, managing individual in a team and managing difficult situations also significance difference with the significance of 0.003, 0.001, 0.000 and 0.000 respectively, in which lowest income group recorded more competency than other income level.

### **3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study is conducted to analyses the stress management competencies of managerial staff of banks in the Batticaloa district. Further this study explores the effect of personal factors in stress management competencies. The study found that the stress management competencies are at high level, significance of 0.000. The dimensions of stress management competencies such as respectful and responsible behavior, managing and communicating work, managing individual in a team and managing difficult situations also falls at high level, where managing individual in a team is highest than other dimensions.

The analysis proof that the negative weak significance correlation between age and managing individual in a team, managing difficult situations and stress Management competencies. And experiences also have similar effect like age. It ensures the lack reflective practice and involvement of managerial employees to enhance their competencies. Hence, the experienced staff usually assumes the role of leadership and they are the role model for young generation, therefore special awareness have to be taken among managerial staff to have reflective practice and keep mind to improve their managerial competency over the experience. The analysis shows the insignificance positive effect of current training practice on the competency of staff. Hence, the current training practice and content is needed to be redesigned in such a way to enhance the stress management competencies of managerial staff.

The personal profiles of managerial staff also have significance effect on their stress management competency. Female staffs have more competence in managing difficult situations than male. Joint family setting also produces more stress management capacity than separate. Educational qualification strengthen stress management competency. Therefore, management can bring awareness of joint family setting and it's important. Special attentions have to be taken to increase the capacity of male staff for managing difficult situations. Further, graduate can be encouraged to upgrade their academic qualification.

The family size has only impact on the managing difficult situations, where family size of two recoded highest competency. Higher designated employees face difficulty in managing difficult situations. Further, type task involved also influence on the competency of managers, such as communicating work and managing difficult situations. It shows that front counter and loan related task

shows lowest competency than other task. So task delegations have to be revised in an effective manner.

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