



Does Job Stress play any role in Work Motivation of University Clerical Employees?

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Abstract

Employee is one of the key factors of the organization success. Organizations often attempt to satisfy and motivate their employees to gain their commitment to duty and to get their better performance. However, it is not easy for the organizations to be successful in making individual motivated for their better performance. Through this study we have tried to find out the role of job stress in work motivation of clerical employees. The study has been conducted on one of the important central universities of India, i.e., Banaras Hindu University. The university plays an important role in the higher educational area at national and international levels. The study has been taken up with special reference to clerical employees of the university. 201 clerical employees were asked on various items that measure their Job stress and Employee motivation. The objective of this study is to determine the relationship among Job stress and Employee motivation. The results were examined by using appropriate statistics. The results revealed that organizations should take some initiations to improve working conditions and make employee-friendly work-environment in workplaces and offices. This research attempts to contribute new knowledge to the existing literature pertaining to relationships between Job stress and Employees' motivation with special reference to clerical employees.

Keywords: Job stress, employee motivation, personal growth, conflict, health.

Introduction

In any organization, employees have important place for its development and success. An organization cannot succeed without enough level of work motivation of staffs. University often attempts to motivate and satisfy their employees to get benefit of their better performance. But it's not so easy for institutions to make their employees motivated to get their better performance because employees perform for several different reasons. A motivated employee makes sure the spirit of cooperation and satisfaction within the sphere of its influence. There are some variables, which existed and affect the motivation of employees and speed of performance; and Job stress is one of them. Job stress is an important factor which affects the mental and also physical health of employees. It affects the behavior and performance of employees badly in institution. It also affects the employee motivation and satisfaction of employees and lastly affects the performance and development of the organizations where they work. It may be the matter of consideration that while some stress is normal, excessive stress can interfere with one's mind and body and impact on physical and emotional health. Every person is different from others and the stressors in different situations/environment may also vary with different types of peoples. Thus the coping strategies and ways to overcome stress may be different in many ways, such as high or low will-power, motivation, persistence, body strength, etc. The ability to manage stress in the workplace can not only improve the

physical and emotional health of a person, it can also make the difference between success and failure on the job.

Job Stress: We feel stress but what is it? In simple statement, stress is the result of pressure and imbalance of mental and emotional or other factors. Job stress is harmful physical and emotional responses that may occur when a conflict rises between requirements of service and the capacity and powers of an employee. Job stress can affect both employees and organizations alike. Fear of job redundancy, layoffs due to an uncertain economy, increased demands for overtime due to staff cutbacks act as negative stressors.

Job stress is a harmful mental and responses that appear when job demands are higher than worker's capacity, resources, needs, abilities and skills¹. It is taken as major challenge world-wide to individual mental and physical health, and organizational health². By some estimates work-related stress costs the national economy a staggering amount in sick pay, lost productivity, health care and litigation costs³. According to Selye, stress is 'the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it'⁴. In other words, the body reacts to stressors- the things that upset or excite us in the same way, regardless of whether that is positive or negative. Stressed workers are also more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work. And their organizations are less likely to succeed in a competitive market. Stress can be acute, episodic or chronic depending on the nature of the stressors.

Work Motivation: Motivation is an important factor to institutional effectiveness and commitment. It is a significant variable to get high performance and satisfaction. Although big institutions having various faculties, departments and units have attempted for last many years to make an attention to the role of employee's motivation, but is a factor that is still ignored by academic institutions. Motivated employees are a necessary need of an organization to adjust with our hectic changing job demands day by day. Motivated employees serve organizations to run with the current world. Employees are more productive when they are motivated. Today, it is a demand of time that administrators have to understand what factors and procedures motivate their staffs to get their better and high performance for an aggressive development of their organizations so that they could remain stand with the rapid changing world.

Many researchers have attempted to define the concept of work motivation. Motivation may be defined as the psychological process that gives behavior purpose and direction⁵; a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific, unmet needs⁶; an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need⁷; and the will to achieve⁸. Dublin defines motivation as a 'complex of forces starting and keeping a person at work in an organization'⁹. Dalton defines motivation as 'the way in which urges, desires, aspirations, striving or needs direct, control or explain the behaviour of human beings'¹⁰. Motivation promotes job satisfaction and increases productivity. Robins defines motivation as 'the willingness to exert high levels of efforts to reach organization goals, conditioned by the efforts ability to satisfy some individual needs'¹¹. Management can do its job effectively only through motivating people to work for the accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Review of Literature: Several studies on the relationship between job stress and employee motivation have concluded that these variables are inversely related. This means a higher level of job stress will cause a lower level of motivation. Herzberg noticed that motivation is often a little known subject for managers. Many managers think they can motivate their employees by offering raises or other benefits¹². The study of Herzberg has shown that these kinds of offerings only have a short term positive effect, because employees do not get internally motivated from it¹². An assumption based on this finding could be that employees who work in an environment with a low level of internal motivation, experience a higher level of stress. Due to the fact that they get pushed to perform a job for which they are not internally motivated. This indicates a difference between the actual and preferred level of influence on the job. Such a low level of decision latitude is defined by Karasek as one of the factors resulting in job stress¹³. The results of the study of Abdel Halim show that the way, employees cope with stress, depends on the enrichment level of the jobs they have. Individuals on high-enriched jobs are able to direct stress into performance. Stress causes them to become more involved in planning and understanding the work itself, their personal role in it and the role of others. On the other hand,

individuals on low-enriched jobs have fewer options to direct stress in a positive way¹⁴. Wallgren and Hanse found that motivators were negatively related to the level of perceived stress¹⁵. The work of Wallgren and Hanse shows that although increasing motivators on the job (job enrichment) has a positive effect on the motivation of workers, it can also affect the level of perceived stress¹⁵.

Keeping in view the effects of job stress and importance of employee motivation for organizational growth and also growth of employees, this study is an attempt to explore job stress and employee motivation interface. The study has been conducted on one of the important central universities, namely, Banaras Hindu University well-established in Varanasi city of India. The study has been taken up with special reference to clerical employees of Banaras Hindu University. The university plays an important role in the higher educational area in India at national and international level. A specific focused study with the administrators and employees of the university would help to frame the future strategies for betterment of the university and its employees.

Objective: To examine the role of Job Stress in Employee Motivation of clerical employees of Banaras Hindu University.

Hypotheses: Keeping in view of the literature and earlier studies concerning the role of Job Stress in Employee Motivation, the present study has been focused to examine the relationships between employee's motivation and job stress. The following hypotheses were proposed: i. Job Stress would have negative relationship with Employee motivation. ii. The job stress dimensions, namely- Poor Peer relations, Intrinsic impoverishment and Low status would have positive relationship with employee motivation. iii. The job stress dimensions, namely- Unprofitability, Role overload and Political pressures would have negative relationship with employee motivation.

Methodology

Sample: All the clerical employees of the Banaras Hindu University were determined as population for the study. The University administration was requested to provide a comprehensive list of the total number of permanent clerical employees working in its different departments and offices. A consolidated list of 530 clerical employees was received from the University, in which 458 clerical employees were individually approached for purpose of the research work. Out of total 530 clerical employees, only 235 employees could return their feedback on the given questionnaires, out of which only 201 data were found duly filled up in all respects and includable for statistical analysis to find results of this study.

Measures: Occupational Stress Index (OSI): The 'Occupational Stress Index' developed by Srivastava and Singh was used for measurement of Workplace stress of employees.

This index consists of 46 items, each to be rated on the five-point scale. It has 12 dimensions. The Occupational Stress Index (OSI) is questionnaire-based, and does not require on-the-job analysis. The reliability index as ascertained by split-half (odd-even) method and Cronbach’s alpha-coefficient for the scale as a whole were found to be 0.935 and .90, respectively. The validity of this index is -.51 (N=500).

Employee Motivation Schedule: The ‘Employee Motivation Schedule’ developed by Srivastava was used for assessment of motivational level of employees. This index consists of 70 items (10 for each area) and 7 dimensions of work motivation. This is a four-point scale. The reliability coefficients for this index as ascertained by split-half method were found between .72 to .82 and by test-retest method it was found between .79 to .86. The validity of this index for job involvement is .78 - .83 (N=101) and for Role Stress is -.31 to -.65.

Results and Discussion

Results: To test the hypotheses formulated for the present study, in the first step of the statistical analysis, Correlation Coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between the predictors and criterion variable.

The results of correlation coefficients indicate that Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict were found to be significantly negatively correlated with Self Control. Responsibility was found to be significantly positively correlated with Personal Growth, whereas Under-Participation and Powerlessness were found to be significantly negatively correlated with Personal Growth. Poor Peer Relations was found to be significantly and positively correlated with Monetary Gain, Non-Financial Gain and with Social Affiliation. Intrinsic impoverishment was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with Personal Growth but positively correlated with Monetary Gain, Non-Financial Gain and with Social Affiliation. Low Status was also found to be significantly positively correlated with Monetary Gain and Non-Financial Gain. Strenuous working conditions was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with Personal Growth, Achievement and with Self Control. Role overload, Political pressures and Unprofitability were found non-significantly correlated with Employee motivation overall.

To find out the casual links between Job Stress as predictor and Employee’s Motivation as criterion variable, multiple regression analysis was performed. The results of the multiple regression analysis (step-wise) have been shown in the table-2.

Table-1
Correlation Coefficients between Job Stress and Employee Motivation (N =201)

Predictor (Job Stress)	Employee Motivation						
	Personal Growth	Achievement	Self Control	Monetary Gain	Non-Financial Gain	Social Affiliation	Self Actualization
Role Overload	-.005	.087	.024	.031	.134	.073	.000
Role Ambiguity	-.072	-.114	-.186**	.113	.081	.102	-.063
Role Conflict	-.129	-.134	-.185**	-.015	-.069	.033	-.078
Political Pressures	.030	.018	-.099	.057	.009	.069	-.063
Responsibility	.193**	.003	.056	.031	.056	.073	.027
Under-Participation	-.214**	-.044	-.012	-.071	-.077	-.012	-.034
Powerlessness	-.285**	-.057	-.026	.048	.036	.030	.006
Poor Peer Relations	-.057	.090	.131	.226**	.237**	.207**	.127
Intrinsic impoverishment	-.196**	-.047	-.109	.197**	.160*	.158*	.037
Low Status	-.097	-.016	-.040	.260**	.144*	.081	.048
Strenuous working conditions	-.139*	-.201**	-.244**	.100	.000	-.019	-.175*
Unprofitability	-.004	-.081	.034	-.036	-.019	.022	-.088

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table-2
Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis (Step-wise) for Job Stress as predictor and Employee Motivation (overall) as criterion variable

Model	Predictor variables	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	R ² Change	β	F	p
1.	Poor Peer Relations	.204	.042	.037	.042	.204	8.636	.004
2.	Under-Participation	.306	.094	.084	.052	-.270	10.223	.001
3.	Strenuous working conditions	.369	.136	.123	.043	-.216	10.370	.002

1. Predictors: (Constant), Poor Peer Relations. 2. Predictors: (Constant), Poor Peer Relations, Under-Participation. 3. Predictors: (Constant), Poor Peer Relations, Under-Participation, Strenuous working conditions

The results of stepwise multiple regression analysis show that Poor Peer Relations (Job Stress) was significantly positively associated with Employee Motivation (overall) ($\beta = .204$, $p < .01$), whereas Under-Participation (Job Stress) was significantly negatively associated with Employee Motivation (overall) ($\beta = -.270$, $p < .01$), and Strenuous working conditions (Job Stress) was also significantly and negatively associated with Employee Motivation (overall) ($\beta = -.216$, $p < .01$). The above results also indicate that Poor Peer Relations explains 4.2% of total variance in Employee Motivation (overall), whereas Under-Participation explains 5.2% of total variance in Employee Motivation (overall) and Strenuous Working Conditions explains 4.3% of total variance in Employee Motivation (overall).

Discussion: When employees perceive an imbalance between demands and environmental or personal resources, this can cause a number of possible reactions. These may include physiological responses (e.g. increase in heart rate, blood pressure, hyperventilation), emotional responses (e.g. feeling nervous or irritated), cognitive responses (e.g. reduced attention and perception, forgetfulness), and behavioral reactions (e.g. aggressive, impulsive behavior, making mistakes). When people are in a state of stress, they often feel concerned, less vigilant and less efficient in performing tasks. Why does an organization need motivated employees? The answer is survival¹⁶. Motivated employees are needed in our rapidly changing workplaces. Motivated employees help organizations survive. Motivated employees are more productive. To be effective, managers need to understand what motivates employees within the context of the roles they perform. Of all the functions a manager performs, motivating employees is arguably the most complex. This is due, in part, to the fact that what motivates employees changes constantly¹⁷. For example, research suggests that as employees' income increases, money becomes less of a motivator¹⁸. Also, as employees get older, interesting work becomes more of a motivator.

In the present study, the nine out of twelve dimensions of Job Stress were found significant predictors for work motivation. Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict were found to be significantly negatively correlated with Self Control (Motivation) which shows that clerical employees with the high Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict natures are more likely to be

unmotivated with their job. Responsibility was found to be significantly positively correlated with Personal Growth which indicates that if clerical employees are given responsibilities, their personal growth would be raised in positive direction. It may be possible because such type of persons want to take up more responsibilities in general and feel themselves accountable for their work, whereas Under-Participation and Powerlessness were found to be significantly negatively correlated with Personal Growth which show that if clerical employees are working with less powers and under-participation, their personal growth will be interrupted and due to these they feel unmotivated for their work. Under-Participation explains 5.2% of total variance in Employee Motivation. Poor Peer Relations was found to be significantly positively correlated with Monetary Gain, Non-Financial Gain and Social Affiliation and explains 4.2% of total variance in Employee Motivation which indicate that if there are harmony, mutual understanding and clear-cut distribution of works among the employees, they would feel motivated for their job. Intrinsic impoverishment was found significantly and positively correlated with Monetary Gain, Non-Financial Gain and Social Affiliation which indicates that if employees are given opportunities to utilize their full capacity to give their suggestions, participate in problem solving and decision taking, they would be more motivated to perform their job with an interesting manner. Low Status was also found to be significantly positively correlated with Monetary Gain and Non-Financial Gain which shows that is manager care of employee's self-esteem, employees is given enough space, officers give proper importance to their skills and performance and employee's job is viewed as respectful in society, they must feel more motivated to perform their job in better way. But Strenuous Working Conditions was found significantly and negatively correlated with Personal Growth, Achievement and Self Control and explains 4.2% of total variance in Employee Motivation, which is an indication to organizations and their managers and officers to improve working conditions and make employee-friendly work-environment in their offices. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the study was found to be accepted that Job Stress have negative relationship with employee's motivation. Poor Peer relations, Intrinsic impoverishment and Low status were found significantly positively correlated and associated with motivational dimensions, namely, Monetary Gain, Social affiliation and Non-Financial Gain. Thus the 2nd hypothesis of the study was found to be partially accepted.

Unprofitability, Role overload and Political pressures were found having no significant relationship with employee's motivation. Therefore, the 3rd hypothesis of the study was found to be unaccepted.

Conclusion

In the light of the results obtained, it can be concluded that university administration should pay more attention to its clerical non-teaching teaching employees who are working in its different departments, centres and offices. The most important conclusion of the study is that the motivation level of clerical employees is not so much affected significantly by Unprofitability, Role overload and working under political pressures more than strenuous working conditions, powerlessness, conflicting situations and under-participation. Clerical employees are reported to be unmotivated with their job mostly due to job stress factors. The universities should take some corrective measures to improve their working conditions and make employee-friendly work-environment in workplaces and offices and also should take initiation of some courses of personality development, skill development and training programs to get their employees sufficient motivated for their job and finally to get their speedy and better performance in the interest of the development of organizations and personal growth of their employees. In order to make employees motivated and committed to their jobs in academic organizations such as Banaras Hindu University, there is a need for strong and effective improvement at the various levels- departmental, faculty level and also administrative level of the organizations.

Limitations: The findings of the study are based on the data obtained from the clerical employees only. Therefore, in future studies, teaching, technical and library employees should also be included for generalizing the findings at a broader scale. The findings are based on the sample taken from Banaras Hindu University only. Data from other universities of India on clerical employees may produce more clear picture of the role of Job Stress in Employee's motivation. In future studies, there is a need to take also some other relevant predictor variables like personality dimensions, commitment and job performance, etc. in exploring their impact on work motivation.

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