

Qualitative inquiry on role stressors faced by commercial bank managers in Sri Lanka

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Introduction

As a result of rapid development in technology and increasing job and family demands stress among individuals has become a key factor in today's society. If there is a gap between job or family demands and the ability to meet those demands then it results in stress. Stress is defined as a psychological state which is a resulting from a wider process of interaction between the individual and his/her work environment (Cox et., al, 2000). Hence job-related strains are reactions or outcomes resulting from the experiences of stress (Ivancevich and Matterson, 1984; Yahaya et al., 2009).

Research Problem

Role stressors emerge as a result of individual's job role and the demand generated from the respective job or from the individual's family demands (Ivanchevich et al, 2006). As such individual's reaction to role related stress and its outcome intensify generating psychological stress (Srivasatra, 1997; Moorhead and Griffin, 1999). The role stressors also create chronic conditions in the workplace that may negatively affect an individual's overall wellbeing (Yahaya et al., 2009). As a result of that frustration psychosomatic, mental disease and general feeling of dissatisfaction develop due to high levels of stress (Srivasatra, 1997; Robbins and Judge, 2008; Yongqing et., al, 1993).

Stress can also result from family demands on an individual. Those who lack sufficient free time from work, for family matters experience stress, fatigue and strain, which can have adverse effects (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 1990). The most prevalent type or form of work-family conflict occurs when the time demands of one role make it difficult or impossible to participate fully in the other role (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 1990).

Scope and Objectives

The present study focuses on the banking and finance sector in Sri Lanka, which is vital for the economic growth of the country. The fierce competition to maintain market share, causes commercial bank managers to undergo huge pressure to perform. Hence, it is important to investigate the role stressors faced by the commercial bank managers in Sri Lanka.

In this study it is intended to investigate the causes of role stressors faced by commercial bank managers in the country and also to identify key role stressors which are affecting the managers' performance which impacts in turn upon the success of a bank's operations.

Two main themes identified in the present study as causes of role stressors faced by commercial Bank Managers are: (a) the combination of job demand and family demand generate role stressors, (b) role stressors such as structural complexities, functional complexities, role ambiguity, role conflicts and role overload generated by job demand and the family stress.

Methods

Using qualitative method data was gathered to capture the individual managers' experiences on role stressors. In-depth interviews were conducted to investigate role stressors. Group discussions among respondents were not considered under qualitative study where respondents were not comfortable to discuss their opinion in front of a mixed audience, therefore the researcher selected in-depth interviews as the best possible qualitative research method (Sekaran, 2009 and Bryman and Bell, 2007). The interviews were conducted with a sample of 12 Branch Managers of six commercial banks in Sri Lanka (two respondents each from People's Bank, Bank of Ceylon, Commercial Bank, Hatton National, Sampath and Seylan Bank) using a structured questionnaire.

Data was analysed by using Constant Comparative Analysis (Glaser and Straus, 1967) which involves taking one piece of data (one interview, one statement, one theme) and comparing it with all others that may be similar or different in order to develop possible relations between various pieces of data. Finally the respective statements were reviewed to identify whether sufficient data exists to support responding to each research question.

Findings

The findings show that causes for role stressors among commercial Bank Managers were generated through job demands and family demands. Further, the findings confirmed that increasing job demands caused role stressors such as structural complexities through multi reporting structure operating in the banks where Bank Managers report to Regional Manager and functional departmental heads of the respective banks, Functional complexities generated through multiple responsibilities of Bank Managers such as Marketing and Sales, Finance and Accounting, Human Resources, Operations, Planning, Office Administration, Corporate Relationships, Internal Controls (Auditing) and Project Inspections, where the said functions are performed by separate functional departments in Head Office. Role Ambiguity is created through unclear instructions received from the Head Office; Role Conflicts are generated due to inadequate staff, from time to time receiving conflicting demands from Regional Manager and various departmental heads in the Head Office; Role overload is generated by difficulty in clearing day's work, Manager on call during weekend banking, outstanding work taken home to finish, meeting deadlines, late hours of work, shortage of staff and staff transfers. Among the role stressors created through family demands, the main ones were: taking unplanned leave to attend to family matters, finding time to teach or do homework for children, difficulty in finding time to take old parents to doctors and not having permanent domestic servants are the crucial stress causing factors. Out of six role stressors in the study three main stressors namely functional complexities, role conflicts and role overload have a major influence on Bank Managers compared to the other three stressors.

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