

Combating Stress by Bank Employees with Social Support under Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The entire world/world economy has been stopped currently due to coronavirus pandemic more known as Covid-19. It was started with Wuhan, China in 2019 has now spreaded now to more than 188 countries of the world. It is spreading within people due to close contact with each other. World Health organization (WHO) has declared this outbreak as pandemic on 11th March 2020. Almost every country of the world has been locked down since March 2020 and for the first time in history international trading and travelling has been banned. Currently Active Cases all over the world is 5,97,25,211 with majority in USA (currently Active 49,70,963 Cases). This pandemic has already caused global economic disruption & right now we are observing largest economic depression. The first case of COVID-19 in India was reported on 30th January 2020 & on 24th March 2020 Phase-1 lock down was declared by Prime-Minister Narendra Modi in India. Everything is bolted except various essential services like Medical, Hospitals, Foods & Fruits etc. Doctors, Nurses, Police, Army, Sanitation Employees are playing important role as warriors, along with them Bank Employees' are playing an unimaginable Role. Bankers have played significant role since the beginning of Corona Pandemic. They have cope up with this drastic situation & provided much needed service to customers. They ensured sufficient money is provided where needed. Even by knowing different possibilities of risk, bank employees ensured essential services are not interrupted. Bank staff have taken all important measures for their own safety, family safety and customer safety. Approximate 14 lakh bank employees are providing service to entire nation at very High risk. Many of the bank staff are detected with covid-19 positive, but still sufficient services are provided in entire nation. They are important & inseparable part of Corona warriors, but definitely stressed with all this situation. In this Pandemic situation, Social Support received by a Bank employee have a crucial role. This support can enhance the inspiration of employee. During this Pandemic, adequate safety measures are ensured by Branch Manager & his peers. But this has impact on the stress of employee. Organization culture do play important part in reducing employee stress. Top management support is much needed to have adequate safety in banking premises. Various safety measures taken like working with 50 % staff, Hand gloves, Facemask, Premise/ counter sanitization have ensured Bank Staff Safety. These all-important measures were taken by Banking industry to reduce the employee stress as much as possible. Outside the organization all the important care is taken by family of the employee. They are providing quality food, maintain health & also maintained home cleanliness that reduces the stress of employee to great extent. Thus, social support is important part in employee's routine life, but more crucial in this type of Pandemic situation. Friends & Relatives can also reduce the stress of employees by giving them regular calls and talk to them regarding health, give updates regarding covid-19 which may be useful and give some entertainment which can make employee relax.

Keywords: Social Support, COVID-19, Bank Employees, Social Support as mediator between stress and bank employees.

Introduction

Man is a socially driven animal engaged with many emotions, affected by the people surrounding him. Leader play a crucial role in guiding the behavior of a person. His productivity is dependent upon how much stress-free he is, for which his surrounding environment plays vital role. With the rising competition, a lot of pressure is created on Employees in every organization. This is because man is the only factor of production who can differentiate his organization. This is why now every organization is making strategies that are "**Employee Focused**". The importance of Employees has continuously increased in last few decades. Workforce has become a key to success in organization. Organizations are applying many strategies to reduce the stress of employees & increase their motivation, because it has direct connection with organization's results.

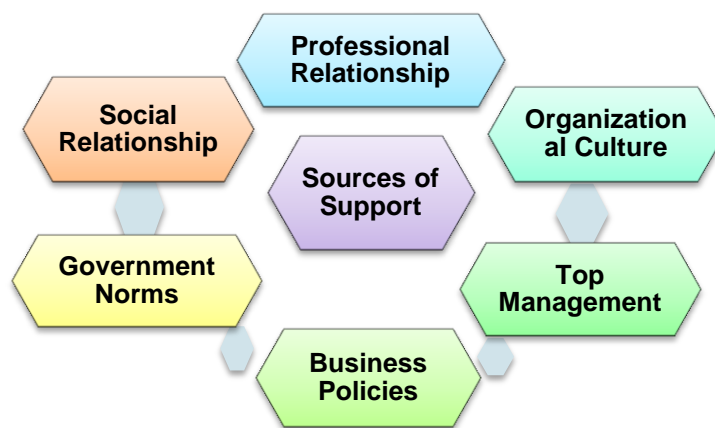
Currently the entire world is facing **Global Pandemic COVID-19**, more popularly known as **CORONA –VIRUS**. It has almost stopped the entire world economy. This has created big havoc in entire world. It is a contagious disease speeded within people through close contacts. As per sources this disease was first identified in **Wuhan, China in December 2019**. As of now (24th November 2020) there are 5,97,25,211 million cases reported all over the world. Covid-19 has been declared public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) by World Health Organization on 30th January 2020 & global pandemic on 11th March 2020. Almost all the businesses & services have come to a stop all over the world except certain essential services. Right now, the global economy is facing great depression. Almost all the countries in World were under severe lockdown, only essential services were available. Essential sector workers are highlighted as Corona Warriors but **Banking sector** received less importance. Banking industry is the financial backbone of the economy. In this pandemic situation, they rendered the efficient services to their customers without any back stepping.

Even the staff of banking has been under the stress since the beginning of Lockdown in India. It is because they constantly come in touch with public that come from diverse areas. Approximately 14 lakh bank employees are providing essential banking services at a very high risk. Many employees from banking staff are detected positive for Covid-19 but still bank

employees continue to serve the nation. Bank management / staff has to provide to customers the digital channels through which they can use banking facility from any part of the world. Along with it should be also ensured that banking services are not faltered at any point of time. Also, the infection among banking staff is continuously increasing & so they have to be quarantined for at least two weeks. From this it can be said that entire banking industry is one of the important parts of Corona Warriors. Along with customer service stress, they are also stressed by Corona. They need great **Social Support** from both inside & outside the organization to reduce the stress i.e. internal & external environment.

First let us see how from internal organization employee can get maximum support. **Organization/ Management Support** play a vital role in reducing the stress of employees. Management has tried to work with 50% staff, working with hand gloves, sanitizer, premise/counter sanitization, maintaining social distance etc. This has benefitted staff to a great extent & also increased their safety. Also, the **attitude of immediate boss** (i.e. Branch Manager/ Assistant Branch manager) has direct impact on stress of their staff. Actual orders from **top management** & government were to be followed by them, which has been done by them in best possible ways to ensure safety of their staff & public. **Peer support** is the best support to motivate employees & reduce their stress. It is because peers will help in sharing the work & also employee can share feelings with them.

Now from external factors outside the organization, **family culture** can reduce the stress of employee by healthy food & good surrounding family environment. This will improve the immunity of person which will increase chances of his safety. Also, **friends & relatives** can reduce stress by talking with person at regular interval & sharing light moments with them.



Factors Affecting Stress of Employee

The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to disrupt banking performance due to following reasons:

- Anxiety due to pandemic,
- Economic, Social & Psychological sickness,
- Unstable work environment,
- Rapid application of digital technology,
- Aggressive & Contingent Management of banking activities,
- Employee's lives & family insecurity etc.

Significance of The Study

This study will be useful to many of the stakeholders of the organization. Everybody will see this research work from different aspects, because everybody will have different use of it. Different stakeholders for this study are: -

- Corporate
- Researchers
- Academicians
- Students
- Various Universities etc.

This can be said as modern study of modern employees of the modern corporate. *Although here, special focus is on banking industry, but this research can be used in any organization through certain customization.* Social Support to employees was there in past decades also, but its importance has increased to great extent nowadays. Various banking corporate can use this study to enhance motivation of their employees. People related to Academic activities can be used to guide their students, further research studies can be conducted from this research, can be related with previous materials & find changes about the needs of modern organization.

Thus, this study will fill the gaps which were present in previous researches & will produce modern factors that will affect productivity of employees. Also, there will be communication with employees & new opinions can be available which can be

used by modern corporate to have cordial relationship with employees. The corporate that will use this data will definitely have solution of problem of **Employee Turnover & Productivity**.

Review of Literature

Tim Rees & Paul freeman [2009]; showed that there is direct relationship between stressors & employee task performance which can be mediated by social support to have positive influence.

Paul Chou [2015]; results revealed that social support directly contributes to subjective well-being of employees and indirectly through self-efficacy.

Sasmita Das, Sashmita Kumari, Rashmeemala Pradhan [2015]; study concluded that there is strong & positive relationship between family support & job performance.

Shu-Hung Hsu, Kuo-Chung Huang, Kuo-Sue Huang [2015]; study showed that social support has impact on Job satisfaction & well-being of employees.

Olaajo, Oyeboade [2016]; findings of this study revealed that there is significant positive relationship between social support & work commitment of employees, on the other hand there is also positive relationship between work motivation & work commitment of employees.

Dr. KDV Prasad, Dr. Rajesh W. Vaidya [2020]; here findings suggest that various covid-19 parameters like workplace isolation, lack of peer advise, lack of communication, family distractions and role overload; occupational stress causing factors—workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, social support, career, job-control will have impact on stress of a person.

Salima Hamouche [2020]; here it was found that COVID-19 has negative impact on individual mental health.

Sougata Ghosh [2020]; COVID-19 has great impact on employees' stress and the productivity, which have direct impact on performance of the organization.

Scope of the Study

The importance of human resource of the organization is continuously increasing. Organizations are trying best possible ways to maintain some workforce in organization, that can continuously improve results for organization. For this research work we have selected various bank employees in Rajkot City. It is because they are one of the most important parts of Corona Warriors. They were already facing stress of providing better services among all & Covid 19 has increased their stress of maintaining their own & family safety. Here researcher will try to find how different Social Support factors will affect employee performance in different ways.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze relationship between social support & Employee performance.
- To examine impact of social support on employee stress under Covid-19 pandemic situation.
- To scrutinize the important social support factors that influences employee performance.
- To identify highly impactful social support factors among all which reduces the stress of employee under Covid -19.

Methodology

The researcher has conducted a survey through Google Form to know the opinion how the bank employees are combating stress with the help of social support under COVID-19 pandemic situation. The reason for this is to be able to provide adequate discussion for the readers that will help them understand more about the issue and the different variables that involve with it. On the other hand, sources in secondary research will include previous research reports, newspaper, magazine and journal content.

Researcher's Questions

1. Do you agree that social support plays a vital role for every human being as well as employees in this modern & advanced era?

Highly Agree

Agree

Moderate

Disagree

Highly Disagree

2. Do you agree that working under COVID-19 Pandemic has caused stress among Bank Employees?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Moderate

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. Please give rank to the factors that are majorly impacting work stress among employees under COVID-19 situation? (Rank 1-8)

Psychological

Emotional
Cultural
Economical
Regional
Social
Financial
Spiritual

4. Do you think that strong & healthy social support could reduce the stress among employee & enhance their productivity?

Strongly Agree
Agree
Moderate
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

5. Please rank the most effective social supportive tool to reduce the stress under COVID-19 situation among employees?

Peers Support
Relation with Immediate Boss
Organizational / Top Management Support
Family Culture
Friends & Surroundings

6. Why social support is essential element to reduce stress among bank employees specially under COVID-19 in this era?

7. What do you think reduction in stress among employees could enhance employees' productivity? If yes, then how?

Respondent's Responses

Do you agree that social support plays a vital role for every human being as well as employees in this modern & advanced era?

The majority of respondents have been positive for the answer. All the respondents are either falling in category of strongly agree or agree category. Among all the respondents 66.7 % strongly agree, while 33.3 % agree that social support has a vital role.

Do you agree that working under COVID-19 pandemic has caused stress among bank employees?

Here also majority of respondents are falling in category of strongly agree and agree category. But there are some respondents who has given response as moderate. Among total respondents 50 % strongly agree, 44 % agree, against them 5.6 % given moderate as response.

Please give rank to the factors that are majorly impacting work stress among employees under COVID-19 situation? (Rank 1-8)

Mixed responses have been found from the respondents as all of them are connected with different situation. But majority of respondents has ranked psychological factors as most important & spiritual factors as least important. Rest of the factors have almost similar impact on work stress of employees depending upon job type & work situation.

Do you think that strong & healthy social support could reduce the stress among employee & enhance their productivity?

Totally positive response has been received from each respondent as far as social support has been concerned. Among the respondents, 50 % has responded strongly agree, 38.9 % has responded agree, and 11.1 % has responded moderate. This shows how the importance of social support has increased in Banking Industry.

Please rank the most effective social supportive tool to reduce the stress under COVID-19 situation among employees?

Here the responses are falling in all the category as per respondents working situation. All the tools are equally effective in reducing stress except friends and surrounding. It has been given least importance among all. Through analysis it was found that all the tools have importance as per the situation.

Why social support is essential element to reduce stress among bank employees specially under COVID-19 in this era?

As social support is directly connected with stress of employee, it will have a great positive impact. Banks were providing essential service continuously during lockdown & now working on full-fledge basis. Bank staff are constantly coming in touch with different type of people in a day. It has increased great risk on bank staff in this pandemic situation, which has direct impact on stress of employee. So, all the respondents are in favour that social support will definitely reduce stress of employee in many ways and forms.

What do you think reduction in stress among employees could enhance employees' productivity? If yes, then how?

There is totally positive response from the respondents that reduction in stress will enhance employee's productivity. Reduction in stress will increase employees focus on the work that will have direct impact on employee's productivity. As per the respondent's opinion management of organization have a great role to play here. Management support will increase the motivation of the employee.

Findings of The Study

- In the modern Banking Industry (also in any business organization), Social Support can be used as important tool to reduce the Stress of employees & enhance their productivity.
- Major Bank employees believe that Social Support will have positive impact on Employee's Productivity.
- As per various responses it was found that the importance of Social Support has increased in the banking industry.
- 66.7 % & 33.3 % respondents Strongly Agree & Agree respectively that Social Support plays a vital role for every human being in modern era.
- 50 % & 44 % respondents Strongly Agree & Agree respectively that working under COVID-19 pandemic has caused stress among bank employees against them 5.6 % respondents given moderate as response.
- It was found that Psychological Factors have major positive impact on work stress of employees under COVID-19 situation.
- As per the research Spiritual Factors have least impact on work stress of employees under COVID-19 pandemic.
- Cent percent respondents agreed that reduction in Stress among employees will enhance Employee's Productivity.

Conclusion

In this competitive era, human resource has important role to play, especially in the banking industry. In this COVID-19 pandemic situation, due to constant touch with variety of customers, the bank employees are feeling stressed. This research was done to analyze how social support can play mediating role between employee stress & their productivity. It has come into picture that social support has positive influence on the employees of the banking industry. There are different parameters of social support which can be used by management as per the need of situation. Various psychological factors of social support can be used to increase motivation of employees, which will improve efficiency of both employee and organization. Management & Family support will bring in positive vibes in employee's life.

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