



Stress Coping Strategies Vs Job Satisfaction - An Analytical Approach

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Abstract

Locke (1976), defines job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences". Job satisfaction is achieved and attained due to various contributory factors.

When job generates salary and satisfaction, it also causes a lot of stress. No doubt, the present working population is undergoing a very high level of stress. Job stress differs across the various industries, differs according to individual jobs and the employee's personal traits, etc.

Managements are making earnest attempts to help workers manage and cope with their stress levels; sans stress a worker will become complacent and unproductive, researchers say... experts argue that an optimum level of stress is not harmful, rather necessary to help the worker stay in the rat race. Employees on their own are also resourcefully finding means to manage their stress, all said and done, when burnt out they automatically devise ways to cope up with stress through various strategies.

It is interesting to note the relationship that exists between the two important facets of the human resource in any industry: Job satisfaction, factors providing the satisfaction to the worker on one side and the stress that the worker undergoes, the stress coping techniques and strategies that he employs ... on the other, the complex and multidimensional relationship between the two – the following paper is an endeavor to critically inspect, investigate and interpret the rapport between the two, viz, Job Satisfaction and Stress coping strategies in the BPO Industry in Puducherry.

Key Words: Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, Stress Management, Stress Coping Strategies, BPO

Introduction

Job satisfaction has become a much discussed and articulated subject leading to various spheres of research. Researchers have also noted that job satisfaction measures vary in the extent to which they measure feelings about the job affective job satisfaction.[1] or cognitions about the job cognitive job satisfaction.[2]

Occupational Stress can be factored in by a number of different variables, but results from the complex interactions between a large system of interrelated variables.[3]. The diathesis-stress model is a psychological theory that aims to make clear of behaviours as a susceptibility burden together with stress from life experiences.[4] It is useful to distinguish stressful job conditions or stressors from an individual's reactions or strains.[5][6] Strains can be mental, physical or emotional. Occupational stress can occur when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the environment or workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete these demands.[7][8]



A concern with stress research is that studies often neglect to consider the broader organizational context.[9]

Statement of the problem

In today's fast paced world, the Human Resource of any industry is infested with a multitude of problems, both at the macro and microlevel. Of course, we understand that doing away with stress will never work out, and that is not what we wish for; all that we try to do, is to formulate and tabulate means to manage stress effectively. This paper is an earnest attempt in studying the relationship between the stress coping strategies and job satisfaction prevailing among workers employed in the BPO industry in Puducherry.

Objectives

In order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between job satisfaction and the stress coping strategies adopted by the BPO Personnel in Puducherry, the following objectives are framed for the present study.

1. To study the extent of Job satisfaction with various factors among employees in BPO companies.
2. To identify the various stress coping strategies adopted by the BPO workers in Puducherry.
3. To analyse the relationship between the Job satisfaction factors and occupational stressors in the BPO field if any.
4. To measure the strength of the relationship between work satisfaction and stress coping strategies, checking their adequacy.
5. To summarize the findings, give conclusion and offer necessary suggestions.

Data Collection and Methodology

The data used in this study are the primary data collected from randomly selected sample comprising BPO personnel in Puducherry using a well-structured questionnaire. To measure occupational stress, various statements with 5 point and 3 point Likert type scales are used in the questionnaire.

Nine major factors contributing to job satisfaction are identified, namely, salary, Good relationship with other employees, Working conditions, Opportunities for Promotion, Recognition in the organization, Freedom of work, Nature of the job, Personal need properly looked after and Working here will have social status.

The relationship between these factors and stress coping strategies – Ignoring Job Conflict, Doing Meditation and Talking with Families to overcome the conflict, Take a day-off when Emotional and lose temper, Let-off tension by other means have been analysed using appropriate statistical tools.

Analysis and Interpretation

The relationship between stress coping strategies and job satisfaction among employees in BPO industry is undertaken through canonical correlation analysis. The results of the analysis are depicted in Table 1 and 2.



From Table 1, which provides the canonical functions, it is evident that only the first function with canonical correlation of 0.5096 is significant at 5 per cent level (Canonical $r = 0.5096, X^2 = 52.71, p < 0.01$).

From canonical R^2 value of 0.2597, it is understood that the shared variance between first canonical variates of the two data sets is 25.97 per cent. As only first function, i.e., correlation between first pairs of canonical variates is significant, it is considered as appropriate for further interpretation. In order to identify the status of relationship between stress coping strategies and job satisfaction, the canonical loadings also called as structure matrix are depicted in Table 2.

From the examination of the table, it is understood that the first canonical variate for criterion variables – job satisfaction is highly loaded by “Good relationship with other employees” and moderately by “Working conditions”, “salary”, “Working here will have social status”, “Personal need properly looked after” and “Recognition in the organization”.

The first canonical variate of the predictor variables - stress coping strategies is highly loaded by “Take a day-off when Emotional and lose temper” and substantially by “Doing Meditation and Talking with Families to overcome the conflict”. So, based on canonical loadings of job satisfaction and stress coping strategies with their respective first canonical variates, it is concluded that the employees who “Take a day-off when Emotional and lose temper” as a strategy to cope with stress are dissatisfied with “Good relationship with other employees” and less satisfied with “Working conditions”, “salary”, “Working here will have social status”, “Personal need properly looked after” and “Recognition in the organization”. At the same time, satisfaction with above job related factors is likely to be at somewhat extent among the employees in BPO industry who do meditation and talk with families to overcome the conflict.

A unique impact of each one of four major stress coping strategies on overall job satisfaction among employees in BPO industry is analysed by multiple regression technique and results of the analysis are shown in Table 3. An observation of the table shows that all three regression models are fitted significantly but with little explained variance ranging between 9.77 per cent and 9.89 per cent (R^2 values). In the first regression model, in which all selected predictor variables are included, the estimated coefficients are significant for the two. So, second model is run after dropping very least significant variables – “Let-off tension by other means”. There is an improvement in overall fit of model as adjusted R^2 has increased to 0.0755 in the absence of the above variable. Again third model is run without “Ignoring Job Conflict”, to know whether there is any further improvement. There is an improvement in overall explanatory power of the third model. Moreover, the third model with just two predictors could explain as much as 8.22 per cent of the variance in the dependent – overall job satisfaction. Therefore is considered as the model of best fit for final inference.

In the third model, the coefficient of “Doing Meditation and Talking with Families to overcome the conflict” with positive sign is significant at 5 per cent level and that of “Take a day-off when Emotional and lose temper” with negative sign is significant at 1 per cent level. Hence, based on third regression model, it is found that overall job satisfaction among BPO employees tend to be high when they do meditation and talk with families without taking a day-off when emotional and lose temper.

The results of canonical correlation analysis identifying the relationship between occupational stressors and job satisfaction of employees in the BPO industry are shown in Table 4 and 5.

A perusal of the Table 4 indicates that the first three canonical functions out of nine produced by the analysis are significant. The correlation between first canonical variates of criterion and predictor sets



is as high as 0.7158 and shared variance between two variates is 51.24 per cent. The correlation between second and third pairs of canonical variates is 0.5550 and 0.4595 with shared variance of 30.80 percent and 21.11 per cent respectively. So, all three significant functions are valid for further interpretation by means of canonical loadings. Table 5 provides the canonical loadings of criterion and predictor variables with first, second and third functions.

It can be seen from the table that all job related factors except “salary” and “Working here will have social status” have sufficient loadings with first function. Among the variables with sufficient loadings, the loading of “Personal need properly looked after” is the highest of all followed by that of “Working conditions”, “Freedom of work”, “Nature of the job”, “Good relationship with other employees”. The loadings of “Opportunities for Promotion” and “Recognition in the organization” are also substantial with first function. With first function all predictor variables have sufficient loadings. However, the loadings of “WorkOverload” are “Strenuous Work Condition” are high and that of other variables also at sizeable level.

The second function is loaded by criterion variables – “salary” and “Working here will have social status”. Among the variables in the predictor set, only three variables, namely “Inattention of Boss”, “Ambiguous Job” and “Strenuous Work Condition” have required loadings with second function. Similarly with third function, the job satisfaction factors – “Good relationship with other employees”, “Recognition in the organization” and “Working here will have social status”, and occupational stressors – “Ambiguous Job” and “Conflicting Attitude of peers” have sufficient loadings.

Based on the loadings of the variables in both sets, it is found that the employees with little stress from work overload, strenuous working condition and low stress from Time Pressure, Work Pressure, Ambiguous Job, Job unrelated to skill, Conflicting Attitude of peers, Poor Decision Making Skill and moderate level of stress from Inattention of Boss tend to be highly satisfied with their job if their personal need is properly looked after, have better working conditions, freedom of work, nature of job as well as their relationship with other employees is good.

It is also found that the employees with moderate stress from strenuous working condition and ambiguous job and low stress from inattention of boss tend to have less satisfaction with salary and social status of the job.

From the loadings of the variables with third function, it is found that the employees with more stress due to ambiguous job and conflicting attitude of peers is likely to be dissatisfied with Good relationship with other employees, Recognition in the organization and social status of the job.

A unique influence of each occupational stressor on overall job satisfaction evaluated by regression analysis is exhibited in Table 6. As per the table, there are three regressions, first one with all stressors, second and third one after successive elimination of least significant variables in the previous models. It can be seen that all three models are fitted significantly but the fit of third model is considered to be the best one as explanatory power of this model is as same as that of second one but with number of predictors one less than those in second model.

In the third model, estimated coefficients of work overload, strenuous working condition and ambiguous job with negative signs are significant at 5 per cent, 10 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. Hence, based on the statistical significance and sign of the coefficients of the predictor variables in the best fitted third model, it is found that overall job satisfaction of the BPO employees tend to increase if there is a decline in the level of stress from work overload, work pressure and ambiguous job.



Findings and Conclusion

The status of job satisfaction and its relationship with stress management strategies as well as with occupational stressors is analyzed here. From the inferences of the results, it is concluded that the BPO employees are satisfied with “Good relationship with other employees” and “social status of the job” but somewhat satisfied with other job related factors. It is further understood that the above level of job satisfaction is independent of age, gender, marital status, religion, caste, area of residence (origin), education and job status, length of service and income of the employees in BPO industry. But employees’ personality type, companionship, yoga / meditation habit and diversions / vacations play an important role in determining the level of their satisfaction with job in BPO industry.

From the inferences of the canonical correlation between job satisfaction and stress coping strategies, it is concluded that the employees who “Take a day-off when Emotional and lose temper” as a strategy to cope with stress are dissatisfied with “Good relationship with other employees” and less satisfied with “Working conditions”, “salary”, “Working here will have social status”, “Personal need properly looked after” and “Recognition in the organization”.

From canonical correlation between job satisfaction and occupational stress, it is identified that the employees with little stress from work overload, strenuous working condition and low stress from Time Pressure, Work Pressure, Ambiguous Job, Job unrelated to skill, Conflicting Attitude of peers, Poor Decision Making Skill and moderate level of stress from Inattention of Boss tend to be highly satisfied with their job if their personal need properly looked after, have better working conditions, freedom of work, nature of job as well as their relationship with other employees is good.

It is also concluded from the regression results that overall job satisfaction among BPO employees tend to be high when they do meditation and talk with families without taking a day-off when emotional and lose temper. It is further concluded that overall job satisfaction of the BPO employees tend to increase if there is a decline in the level of stress from work overload, work pressure and ambiguous job.

Scope for further research

Continuing on the lines above, further research can be elaborately and extensively undertaken on occupational stress in various industries and the different types of stress coping strategies adopted by various personnel in different work sectors. Job satisfaction, factors contributing to job satisfaction is a never ending topic warranting much more in depth analysis and study. Another interesting point is that with the same job, in the same environment the job satisfaction experienced by different workers even of the same cadre may differ owing to the differences in their personalities, perceptions, etc. We have a plethora of avenues to explore where job satisfaction and stress coping techniques are concerned.

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Annexure

Table 1
Canonical Functions Produced by Canonical Correlation Analysis between Stress Coping Strategies and Job Satisfaction

Canonical Function	Canonical R	Canonical R ² (Eigenvalue)	Chi-Square	df	p-Value	Wilks Lambda
0	0.5096	0.2597	52.71	36	0.0357	0.6246
1	0.3255	0.1060	19.04	24	0.7497	0.8436
2	0.2111	0.0446	6.50	14	0.9524	0.9436
3	0.1111	0.0123	1.39	6	0.9664	0.9877

Source: Primary Data



Table 2
Canonical Loadings of Job Satisfaction Factors and Major Stress Coping Strategies with Significant Function

Variables	Canonical Loadings with First Function
CRITERION VARIABLES	
Job Satisfaction Factors	
Salary	-0.4693
Good relationship with other employees	-0.8987
Working conditions	-0.5753
Opportunities for Promotion	-0.3382
Recognition in the organization	-0.4391
Freedom of work	-0.0958
Nature of the job	-0.2153
Personal need properly looked after	-0.4464
Working here will have social status	-0.4498
PREDICTOR VARIABLES	
Stress Coping Strategies	
Ignoring Job Conflict	0.2813
Doing Meditation and Talking with Families to overcome the conflict	-0.4011
Take a day-off when Emotional and lose temper	0.7886
Let-off tension by other means	0.0422

Source: Primary Data

Table 3
Regression Results for Overall Job Satisfaction with Stress Coping Strategies

Independent Variable	Regression Models		
	1	2	3
Intercept	5.2497*** (9.92)	5.2638*** (10.87)	5.2138*** (11.21)



Ignoring Job Conflict	-0.0756 -(0.39)	-0.0723 -(0.39)	
Doing Meditation and Talking with Families to overcome the conflict	0.4130* (1.93)	0.4164** (2.01)	0.3973** (1.98)
Take a day-off when Emotional and lose temper	-0.5010*** -(2.82)	-0.4983*** -(2.89)	-0.5250*** -(3.33)
Let-off tension by other means	0.0169 (0.07)		
R Square	0.0989	0.0988	0.0977
Adjusted R Square	0.0675	0.0755	0.0822
F Value	3.15** 4..115	4.24*** 3..116	6.33*** 2.117
Degrees of Freedom			

Figures in brackets are t-values for beta coefficients.

*Significant at 10% level; **Significant at 5% level; ***Significant at 1% level

Source: Primary Data

Table 4
Canonical Functions Produced by Canonical Correlation
Analysis between Occupational Stressors and Job Satisfaction

Canonical Function	Canonical R	Canonical R ² (Eigenvalue)	Chi-Square	df	p-Value	Wilks Lambda
0	0.7158	0.5124	187.16	81	0.0000	0.1810
1	0.5550	0.3080	108.52	64	0.0004	0.3712
2	0.4595	0.2111	68.20	49	0.0363	0.5364
3	0.4006	0.1605	42.23	36	0.2199	0.6800
4	0.2893	0.0837	23.07	25	0.5734	0.8100
5	0.2542	0.0646	13.50	16	0.6359	0.8840
6	0.2011	0.0405	6.19	9	0.7212	0.9451
7	0.1228	0.0151	1.66	4	0.7972	0.9849



8	0.0026	0.0000	0.00	1	0.9779	1.0000
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Source: Primary Data

Table 5

**Canonical Loadings of Job Satisfaction Factors and
Major Occupational Stressors with Significant Function**

Variables	Canonical Loadings		
	First Function	Second Function	Third Function
CRITERION VARIABLES			
Job Satisfaction Factors			
Salary	0.2576	-0.6763	-0.0220
Good relationship with other employees	0.6258	-0.0294	-0.5612
Working conditions	0.7618	-0.2173	-0.3737
Opportunities for Promotion	0.4790	-0.2502	-0.1884
Recognition in the organization	0.4475	-0.2628	-0.5221
Freedom of work	0.7283	0.1967	-0.1159
Nature of the job	0.6693	-0.2728	0.0443
Personal need properly looked after	0.8973	-0.2219	0.1859
Working here will have social status	0.2075	-0.5586	-0.5129
PREDICTOR VARIABLES			
Occupational Stressors			
Work Overload	-0.8976	-0.0035	-0.1399
Poor Decision Making Skill	-0.5116	-0.2980	-0.0105
Job unrelated to skill	-0.5604	0.3137	0.3790
Inattention of Boss	-0.4209	-0.4624	0.1232
Work Pressure	-0.6405	0.1677	0.2459
Strenuous Work Condition	-0.8525	0.4043	-0.1210
Time Pressure	-0.6806	0.0247	-0.0852
Conflicting Attitude of peers	-0.5365	-0.2745	0.4601
Ambiguous Job	-0.5886	0.4427	0.5476



Source: Primary Data



Table 6
Regression Results for Overall Job Satisfaction with Occupational Stressors

Independent Variable	Regression Models		
	1	2	3
Intercept	6.7865*** (25.79)	6.8020*** (30.37)	6.7205*** (32.20)
Work Overload	-0.1758** (-2.03)	-0.1573** (-2.00)	-0.1541** (-1.96)
Poor Decision Making Skill	0.0498 (0.67)		
Job unrelated to skill	-0.1270 (-0.86)	-0.1321 (-1.00)	
Inattention of Boss	-0.0144 (-0.23)		
Work Pressure	-0.0976 (-1.26)	-0.0931 (-1.29)	-0.1114 (-1.60)
Strenuous Work Condition	-0.1348 (-1.40)	-0.1491 (-1.66)	-0.1587* (-1.77)
Time Pressure	0.0138 (0.14)		
Conflicting Attitude of Peers	-0.0351 (-0.37)		
Ambiguous Job	-0.2109 (-1.58)	-0.2021 (-1.55)	-0.2654** (-2.32)
R Square	0.4089	0.4056	0.4004
Adjusted R Square	0.3605	0.3796	0.3795
F Value	8.45***	15.56***	19.20***
Degrees of Freedom	9..110	5..114	4..115

Figures in brackets are t-values for beta coefficients.

*Significant at 10% level; **Significant at 5% level; ***Significant at 1% level

Source: Primary Data