

Chapter 5

Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

Overall the study indicates 55.5% of the respondents agreed that their job was stressful as compared to 24.8% who disagreed and 19.7% who remained neutral. The result showed that stress was quite rampant since more than half the sample indicated that they experienced stress at their workplace. The respondents also cited that they experienced difficulty to get up in the morning, they get upset when something unexpected happens and they get easily tired.

The primary purpose of this study is to provide an insight to the cause of stress experienced by the managers and executives in a financial institution. In the study 10 factors related to the job characteristics and organisational climate were identified as the primary causes of stress to managers and executives. The study had identified that "responsibility to task" topped the list of the cause of stress at workplace. The other main cause of stress was "identity", "conflict" and "support". Underlying this study was the primary concern in identifying stressors that were prevalent among managers and executives in the institution and what were the possible reasons behind each outcomes.

Factor analysis had identified nine main causes of job stress in the study. Four characteristics were from job characteristics category and another five from organisational climate characteristics. Topping the list is "responsibility to task" with a mean score of 3.8029 followed by "identity" with a mean score of 3.7628. On the other hand stress factor relating to "job security" was ranked the lowest with a mean score of 2.6496. It tends to indicate that the factor was not a significant cause of job stress among respondents. Factors from organisational climate factor had contributed more occupational stress to respondents than that from job characteristics.

Regression analysis was used to test proposed relationship in research. It revealed that 29 out of 70 stressors items accounted for job stress among manager and executive in the company. The variation which explained the variances under the job characteristics model were "accountability" which was the best predictor followed by "overall stress", and "people problem" respectively as the main factor contributing to job stress among manager and executives in this organisation. Under the Organizational Climate factors which were significant cause of job stress for managers and executives are "uncertainty", followed by "reward" and "responsibility".

Female respondents were comparatively facing greater stress in coping with conflict and support in the organisation compared to their male counterpart who perceived stress in coping with "expectation", "accountability", "decision making" and "job security". Selye (1970) reported that although women may show higher anxiety than men, they suffer less from health threats such as hypertension. According to him the secret of woman's health lies in their superior coping strategy which includes the willingness to share their problems with friends and better time management as compared to man. This is in accordance with this study whereby women perceived stress lesser than their male counterparts.

Supportive family proved the most consistent explanation of coping with work stress (Thomas, 1986) and served as a buffer to the influence of stress job conditions. (Capland, Abbey, Abramis, Conway & French, 1984). The findings in this study is consistent with other findings. (Pahl & Pahl, 1971; House, 1981; Crouther, 1984). For example married manager and executives had experienced less stress in coping with "expectations", seeking for "support" and "warmth" and also managing "conflict" compared to managers and executives who were single.

5.2 Implication of Study

Causes of stress were found at both organisational and individual level. Any attempt to prevent or resolve the negative effects of stress must be addressed

by both the individual and organisation concerned. For individuals stress means human suffering and also a possibility of long term disease. There is a substantial body of occupational health literature which documented the effects of stress. These provide evidence that initial signs and symptoms of stress lead to long term incapacitating disease like coronary heart disease. If individuals are affected, there will be repercussions on family members and further on disrupt family relationship.

Male manager and executives experience higher level of stress compared to women. Managers who are single experience higher level of stress compared to their married counterparts. Actions need to be taken by these groups to control their stress level. Among the actions that can be taken are exercising, change of diet, improved quality of environment or seek new job that is not too stressful.

As for the organisation, aside from impact that stress has on "bottom line", other effects are absenteeism, higher staff turnover, poor staff morale and employee who cannot find job satisfaction. These increases the organisation's cost which lowers the efficiency resulting in lowered productivity. Hence management of organisation should reconsider stress prevention not only as lowering cost but also maintaining and improving organisational health and increasing productivity.

Job stress causes societal problems. Stress causes illness which results in workers retiring early or taking time off to receive treatment. The country loses services of knowledgeable and experienced manpower. Society bears the socio-economic cost in providing medical facilities or other forms of compensation to look after these employees' welfare.

5.3 Recommendations

In order to reduce the effects of stress resulting from responsibilities, it is important for managers and executives to learn how to delegate effectively. To overcome stress employees need to be realistic. They need to firstly

acknowledge their limitations and strengths. It is quite pointless to stretch their abilities to a breaking point. Managers and executives also need to manage their time. Work has to be prioritised and work schedules have to be planned. Individuals need to tackle work that is urgent and important first. Individuals need to clear their workstation of everything which they are not working on. This ensures they stick to one task at a time and lessens the feeling of being overwhelmed.

Managers and executives, especially single and males, need to establish a social support group. They have to learn how to "get it off their chest". It is wise to carefully identify your confidantes.

Management also need to provide appropriate guidance and more organisational awareness of stressors by providing training and support on stress and time management techniques to its employees. Management also need to introduce regular risk assessment to understand and monitor factors which negatively affect employees' health and psychological well being especially those groups which are at risk.

Many organisations respond to statutory legislation by implementing minimum requirement to conform to law in employees' occupational health and safety. Instead of punishing "bad practise" the more effective way would be to reward "good practice". Other than providing advice and support, authority need to consider providing tax incentives for reducing health and safety expenditure incurred by organisation in their effort to reduce job stress.

In addition a good and balanced diet as well as a regular exercise is very beneficial especially during a stressful period. Embark on a relaxation therapy like a massage, aromatherapy or foot reflexology. Avoid usage of tranquilizer which is only useful for a short period of time. Plan some time outside work to do some reflections. Ask yourself "What have I done", "How have I fared?" and "Are there better ways to doing what I have done/not done?". Reflect on these questions and if improvement is possible, do it.

5.4 Limitation of Study

This study has been plagued by the usual time and resource constraints. The findings of the study cannot be generalised since it is focused on a particular type of individual. The study is not exhaustive since it identifies stress from job and organisational characteristics without looking into personality factor. The effects of individual personality were not examined. A person's personality affects the individual's capacity to cope.

Using the questionnaire is an approach of using cross sectional design. Stress is a dynamic process that changes over time and across situation. Therefore, a longitudinal process oriented approach studying how workers cope in a specific situation as they unfold over time is preferred. The process shows actual interchange between person and environment and also a person's response over time to stress experience. As time is of essence it is not possible to use the longitudinal process.

This study is confined to only one bank. It is also restricted to the Head Office and branches in Klang Valley only.

5.5 Suggestions For Further Studies

A more in depth study ought to be conducted on specific cause of stress so that the exact problem can be identified and actions may be taken to remedy the situation.

Individual roles, personal traits, social network and manners should be looked into to see how managers and executives cope with job stress. Integrated study by including the use of both survey and other qualitative method such as observation and interview should be considered.

The usage of samples from other financial institutions was not done. This study is used to generalise to bankers at large. In the future, studies can be conducted with the objective of making comparison among local financial

institutions and foreign financial institutions to identify cultural, structural and other difference which may bring about differences in occupational stress.

Comprehensive research on stress includes organisational stressor, extra organisational stressor, traits of individuals as well as "personality" of organisation. Different organisations have different "personality". An individual may be stressed in one set up but not in another since one man's meat is another man's poison.

5.5 Conclusions

It is hoped that this study provides a general awareness especially among human resource of some of the causes of stress in an organisation. This can serve as a basis for other job related stress research.

Lastly stress may not necessarily be bad in itself. While stress is typically discussed in a negative context, it also has some positive impact. It can provide an opportunity for individual to rise to the occasion and perform to their maximum capacity or even beyond.