Gender Differences in Stress Coping among Select Private Bank Marketing Executives

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Abstract:
The study explores the stress coping styles used by private bank marketing executives by collecting data 600 employees from top three private banks across Punjab through self-administered questionnaire. Two types of coping strategies wererevealed through factor analysis and T-test results showedmale and female employees differed upon use of only one coping strategy over the other. This paper presents the stress coping strategies used marketing executivesof private banks and gender differences among its' usage.

Keywords: stress;coping strategies;stress coping; banking

Introduction

Stressful work environment poses employees at risk of exhaustion and illness related to stress [1]. Stress can be a superior predictor of physical and mental health of individuals [2]. Consequently, coping becomes necessary to deal with stress.Coping has a capacity to help an individual refining community involvement, work performance, and sociability [3]. Stress coping denotes a varied assortment of practices and therapies targeted to regulate the amount of stress among individuals for the improvement of routine working. Coping is regarded as the actions performed by individuals for the reduction or avoidance of stressors in life[4].A study says that the bestand most used coping method is self-controlling and looking for social support[5].Few more coping techniques adopted by the respondents were listening to music, going to isolation, sleeping, playing sports, yoga practice helps in minimizing stress[6]. The success of thesecoping strategies is very difficult toestimate and moreover, the usage quantity and quality of techniques fluctuatesextensively.

Coping with stress is tied in with assuming responsibility for the considerations, feelings, plan, and the manner in which we manage issues [7].People working at various administrative levels have alternate points of view, focus, and push. Hence, coping is completely dependentupon intellectual evaluation that is further prejudiced by their own opinion and wisdom [8]. It is believed that coping can change the effects of stress upon emotional fatigue, depersonalization, and it depends upon perception about life, for example, optimism/pessimism [9].Few coping techniques are referredas adaptive (e.g.

seeking emotional support, active coping, humour, religion, acceptance etc.), however, others are referred as maladaptive (e.g.denial, substance use, venting, self-blame etc.) [5]. Other researchers say that individuals using approach style of coping as compared to avoidance style encounter more stress [10]., and preventive style of coping candeal betterto combat occupational stress [11].

In a survey of managers and managerial trainees, coping behavior was characterized into five categories; talking to someone, physical withdrawal from the situation, working hard or more, shifting to an interesting non-work activities, examining the circumstances to change the attack strategy [12]. Various other studies added to theses styles are, emotions oriented coping, problem oriented coping, coping through distances, coping through emphasizing, coping through self-blaming, tension reduction, coping through self-isolation [13], advice seeking, selective ignoring, direct positive action, positive comparison, discipline [14], use of tranquillizers, taking aspirin, smoking, exercising, and consuming alcohol [15].

The purpose of present study is to know about the stress coping strategies used by select private bank marketing executives in Punjab state of India. The study will further analyze the differences in opting coping strategies on the basis of gender of respondents.

Stress Coping and Gender

It was established that all theindividuals start smoking, drinking coffee or alcohol, and exercise to cope with stress[15]. It was further added that these coping styles are completely dependent upon the personal characteristics of an individual like women may relieve stress by talking to others and most of men use exercise, smoking or drinking [16].While testing the rapport between gender and personality type, perceived stress levels and emotional well-being, it was found switching-off from the situation, exercise and quiet control as the most frequentlyopted stress coping approaches [17].Gender tend to be connected to reaction against stress with females and exhibited themselves as more prone to emotional stress than male counterparts[18].

Although, a lot of research has been carried out on the stress coping strategies being used by individuals in different situations, but not many of them talking about gender differences specifically on the use of those strategies. This study aims to calculate the differences on the basis of gender while choosing stress coping strategy.

The hypothesis for the study is,

H_1: There is significant difference between choosing stress coping strategies in female and male executives.

Materials and methods

Sample of 600 marketing executives were selected through multistage sampling technique, from top three private banks HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, and Axis Bank in the state of Punjab were part of the study.The data were collected through self-administered questionnaire where each item contained a 1-5 Likert Scale based options (1=Most Often, 2=Often, 3=Sometimes, 4=Rare and 5=Very Rare) on which the respondents related themselves. The reliability statistics (Cronbach's alpha value) of Coping Strategies scale came out to be'0.79'.The detailed respondents' profile is presented in table 1.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Profile		Frequency (N=600)	Percentage
Gender	Men	348	58%
	Women	252	42%
Bank Name	HDFC Bank	288	48%
	Axis Bank	198	33%
	ICICI Bank	114	19%
Marital status	Married	156	26%
	Unmarried	444	74%
Monthly Income (in INR)	Up to 20,000	72	12%
	20,000 to 40,000	528	88%
Age	18-25 years	402	67%
	25-30 years	162	27%
	30-35 years	36	6%
Work experience	0-5 years	456	76%
	05-10 years	114	19%
	10-15 years	30	5%

Results and Discussion

Exploratory factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis (PCA)trailed by Varimax Rotation with KaiserNormalization was run to merge the items into factors, and data took three rotations for allowing resulting factors to correlate. The coping strategies scale presented to respondents, was having twenty items, five items loaded together formed a one factor named 'social support' and two item formed another factor named as 'substance abuse'.These extracted factors accounting for cumulative variance of 66.69 per cent. The factor names, item detail, factor loadings, mean, standard deviation, communalities, Percentage of variance explained and Cronbach's alpha are exhibited in table 2.

Analysis results confirm that respondents spend time with family and friends, go for a recreation or picnic, spend time on social networking websites/applications, join some social group(s), and call a good friend, whenever they feel stressed, for coping stress in positive manner and simultaneously, they have a tendency to opt for other stress coping strategies like, drinking and smoking, which are negative in nature.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for stress coping strategies

Factor	Item	FL	Mean	SD	Com	PVE	Alpha
Social Support	Going for recreation or picnic	.567	4.55	0.677	.777	38.49	.871
	Calling a good friend	.609	4.27	0.625	.523		
	Joining social group(s)	.508	4.01	0.690	.608		
	Online Social networking	.781	4.12	0.701	.661		
	Spending time with family and friends	.812	4.96	0.436	.897		
Substance Abuse	Smoking	.629	2.98	0.891	.569	28.2	.692
	Drinking	.799	3.97	0.823	.714		

Note: *FL.: Factor Loading, SD.: Standard Deviation, Com: Communalities,PVE.: Percentage of Variance Explained, Alpha: Cronbach's Alpha*

Social support was also corroborated by a study where researcher found respondents use humor with friends and family often to cope stress [19]. Keeping relations with people and seeking social support were found to be the most frequently used coping approaches [18]. By talking about your stress to other people around may be helpful in coping it [20]. Employees seek interaction with friends, family and parts of society often to manage stress [7]. It was further revealed that respondents reporting lower levels of stress majorly use active stress coping strategies like social support and other active solutions [21].

Another study revealed that to minimize stress levels, alcohol consumption is increased or decreased with the amount of stress experienced [22]. The usual stress reactions are absolutely related to drinking alcohol and smoking habits[17]. An employee who is stressed from job, enhances regularity of liquor drinking and smoking too [23]. It was established that work stressed employees show negative behavioral responses and psychological moods, which includes heavy smoking and escapist drinking [24].

Coping and gender differences

T-test results (table 3)disclosed a significant (p=.001) difference between female and bank marketing executives while opting strategies to cope stress only for one factor of coping i.e substance abuse. Simultaneously, the difference between female and male employees while opting social support coping strategy found to be insignificant.Therefore, H_1: There is significant difference between choosing stress coping strategies in female and male executives, receives support for factor substance abuse but not social support.

Table 3: T-statistics for coping and gender

	Female		Male		t-statistics	
Factor	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**t**	**p**
Social Support	4.61	.69	4.57	.67	.77	.321
Substance Abuse	4.51	1.02	3.47	.59	3.52	**.001**

Note: M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation

Managerial Implications

Since employees are the major assets for any organization, there is a need of the hour to make them feel comfortable at their workplaces. The comfortable place will provide them satisfaction which in turn helps them in increasing their productivity, and then again it will help the organization flourish. Marketing executives who are more prone to get stressed due to their stressful working condition and management expectations, should be taken due care. The organisations must come up with some stress management techniques on weekly or monthly basis which help the employees in making them happy even after many days of work. The recentstudy is going to be very helpful to the human resource managers working in private banking industry as they deal with everyaspectof the workforce. The study results can act as a tool for designing some stress coping techniques for employees, because management of job stress will have a great impact on the employees' productivity at work and a happy employee will last with the company forever. Therefore, a clear understanding of job stress and its management is beneficial for both employees and organisations.

Conclusions

Stress, in our respective lives, is very difficult to ignore. It has become an eternal part of the modern lives.Just like the lives, the jobs are also getting stressful and employees are daily experiencing it. Though they can't get rid out of it, but, they try to reduce in a certain manner(s). In this study, the select private bank employees revealed that they are using two styles for coping stress, i.e., 'Social Support' and 'Substance Abuse'. Social support is tried to find out bycalling friends, joining social groups,being active on social media, spending more time with friends and family, and so on and Substance abuse includes drinking and smoking.

Limitations and Future Research

Out of some limitations of the current study, the first is the cross-sectional nature of the study. Second is about the self-report measures, which might have followed in a potential variation because of biasness of respondents. Third limitation is about the choice of sample where only one state of India was chosen, a larger sample can be more effective in generalizing the study on the whole. Fourthly, the present study focused only on identification of coping strategies being used by employees is discussed and a comparison between women and men is done, but, a broader form of results can be attained by taking other demographical variables in to consideration.

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