

## Perceived Stress Among Bank Employees in Vijayawada, A.P. – A Public vs. Private Sector Analysis

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Abstract:

This study assesses perceived stress levels among different category of employees in public and private sector banks. It also examines the stress levels was due to helplessness or self-efficacy among these two groups. Based on the strata through convenience sampling method, data were collected from 300 bank employees (150 from public banks and 150 from private banks) in Vijayawada City. The study employed the PSS-10 developed by Sheldon Cohen. Data were scored and analyzed in accordance with the instrument's guidelines, utilizing R studio for statistical analysis. The results indicate that perceived stress levels are higher among public sector bank employees than among their public sector counterparts. Significant differences were also observed in the mean stress scores of employees across the two sectors. Moreover, the mean scores of Self-efficacy and Helplessness were found to be higher in public sector employees than private sector employees. Thus, public sector employees perceive their stress negatively and thus they tend to have high stress levels while the private sector bank employees also perceive their stress negatively but comparatively their factors of perception differs and thus there is significant difference in their perceived levels.

**Keywords:** Perceived Stress, Self-Efficacy, Helplessness, public and private bank employees.

### INTRODUCTION

The phrase "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages" signifies health isn't about the physical but its beyond and rather encompasses the mental, emotional, and social aspects of health. The UN SDG 3 is simply not associated with public health programs, but has important consequences on occupational health, especially in the highly demanding fields, like banking.

While all bankers face industry-wide stressors, the nature and intensity often differ between sectors. In PSBs Stress arises from adapting older workforce to new systems, red tape, less autonomy, and inter-union dynamics. In spite job security stress arises from slower, seniority-based promotions and frequent transfers (especially in clerical cadre). Apart from all these bank employees may face unique pressure as representatives of "government" banks, dealing with local political influences and expectations of flexibility in rules.

When we look at Private Sector Banks high stress is from performance-linked appraisals and potential for job instability. Aggressive sales targets, high scrutiny, micro-management, and intense peer competition, keeping pace with rapidly changing digital platforms relate to stress factors. At the regional level some may face pressure to rapidly expand market share in a competitive urban landscape, often requiring long networking hours within the city's business circles. Thus, stress levels are routinely higher, which has led to what many studies describe as a mental health crisis within the industry. A localized study in Vijayawada directly impacts SDG 3.4 that specifically states: "By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being."\*

Vijayawada, being a commercial, political, and educational hub of Andhra Pradesh, has a number of both public sector banks and private sector banks. The city's economy is a mix of traditional agriculture-based commerce, SMEs, transportation and a growing service sector, there lies great demands on banking services. Reducing stress in such a large, influential workforce group in such a city has ripple effects on family and community health. A healthier banking workforce enhances the efficiency of the financial system, which is crucial for Vijayawada's and Andhra Pradesh's economic development. Previous studies about perceived stress in banking sector explored on the stress causing factors and linking them to performance outcomes or comparison of stress levels between public and private sector banks. Few studies with heterogeneity i.e., mix of bank types, demographics and job categories have been conducted. The aim of this study was not to just assess and compare the perceived stress score at the end of financial period but also to understand their stress nature was due to high helplessness or low self-efficacy. This directly helps in understanding whether an individual's mental and emotional well-being is aligning with the SDG target.

### REVIEW OF EARLIER STUDIES

Koura et al. (2025) examined the key stressors affecting banking professionals in Morocco and their relationship to the likelihood of leaving their jobs. Based on survey data from 246 banking employees, primarily in roles interacting with clients, the research concluded that perceived stress is the strongest factor predicting an employee's intention to leave, with excessive workload being the primary cause of that stress. Further it revealed examining middle-aged professionals in the banking sector found that 40% of banking professionals reported experiencing minimal levels of occupational stress, followed by 32.2% experiencing moderate levels and 27.8% experiencing high levels of occupational stress.

Asghar and colleagues (2024) comprehensive study involved 250 employees from both public and private banks in Pakistan which found that a considerable proportion reported moderate to high stress levels, with an average PSS-10 score of 21.4 [2]. This score fell within the moderate stress range (13-26), suggesting that the majority of banking professionals experienced clinically meaningful stress levels. This study demonstrated that dietary habits and lifestyle behaviours play a crucial role in shaping stress levels among bank employees.

G. Vinod and S. Ambatipudi (2024) subsequent research examining stress prevalence across different banking context confirms findings, with moderate to high stress levels reported in 82-90% of samples studied. In South Indian banking settings, approximately 82.2% of 282 bank employees demonstrated moderate to high burnout levels, with 26.2% reporting mild to extremely severe stress. These prevalence rates underscore the systemic nature of stress in banking, affecting the majority rather than minority of employees.

Dinesh, T. K., Shetty, A., Gil, M. T., & D'souza, K. J. (2023) attempted to examine the magnitude of the effects of predictors of perceived stress, mindfulness, self-efficacy and support from family, friends, and significant others on psychological wellbeing both positive and negative amidst 794 Life insurance agents in India. Results showed that all the predictors had significant effects on the outcome study constructs except for self-efficacy which has an insignificant effect on positive psychological wellbeing. They suggested future studies can test the same in other financial sectors where stress levels due to target pressures and deadlines are high in the employees of banks, financial institutions, stock markets, and real estate

Kazmi, Syed & Shukla, et.al. (2023) investigated the contributing factors for occupational stress among middle-aged professionals from the marketing, banking, and teaching sectors in India. The results of the study indicated that occupational stress was higher among marketing professionals in the domains of role overload, role conflict, powerlessness, poor peer relations, low status, strenuous working conditions, and unprofitability in comparison to banking and teaching professionals. They suggested future research can be carried out using gender-based approaches for exploring occupational stress at workplace.

Mekonen, Workneh, et. al. (2022) assessed the prevalence of work-related stress and its associated factors among bank employees in Gondar city, Northwest Ethiopia. This study disclosed the prevalence of work-related stress and associated factors among bank workers. In this study, male bank employees were at a higher risk of developing work-related stress than females. However, the prevalence of work-related stress in this study was lower than in studies conducted in India (75.5%) (Kumar and Sundaram, 2014), Brazil (34.4%) (Petarli et al., 2015), Nigeria (47%) (Okwor et al., 2020).

Mariappan and Kalidoss (2017) in their comparison study to assess the impact of stress on staff performance in both public and private banks in Tamil Nadu's Sivagangai district reveal, private bank employees experience higher levels of stress at work than public sector bank employees. The study describes the occupational stress in public and private banks. Among different job-related stress variables role over load, role authority, role conflict and lack of senior level support contribute more to the occupational stress. Bank employees cannot afford the time to relax and "wind down" when they are faced with work variety, discrimination, favouritism, delegation and conflicting tasks. Mrs. Caral Lopes, Ms. Dhara Kachalia, (2016) have conducted a study in private and public banks. The study found that there is a significant relationship between type of the banks, age, gender and education, job, role, interpersonal relationship and Impact of occupational stress. So the banking sector employee should adopt new coping strategies for maintaining good physical and mental condition to improve productivity. Örüçü & Demir (2009) identified in their study that Job stress varies among individuals due to personal, job-related, and external factors. Perceived stress encompasses feelings of helplessness and inefficacy predicting psychological, physical, and behavioural symptoms. They applied the Turkish translation of Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to a Turkish sample of five hundred and eight freshman students at the Middle East Technical University at the age of 16–29. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of the PSS showed that the scale consisted of two factors: Perceived Helplessness factor and Perceived Self-efficacy. In general, the data indicated that the PSS provides a reliable and valid measure of perceived stress for a Turkish sample. Their findings provide useful information for researchers and practitioners wishing to adapt foreign psychological tests to different cultures.

### OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the study was to compare and understand the perceived stress levels of bank employees of both public and private sectors in Vijayawada city. This is studied by following objectives:

- To determine the PSS scores and conclude whether stress is low or moderate or high level
- To evaluate the perceived level of Helplessness and Self -Efficacy

### HYPOTHESES

H1: There is a no significant difference in the perceived level of stress among the bank employees.

H2: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of perceived helplessness between public sector and private sector bank employees.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### Study Design and Participants:

For the purpose of the study many banks in Vijayawada were approached for permission as soon as the financial year work ended of which only few banks approved for it. The study included both public and private sector bank employees of different categories.

#### Data Collection:

Perceived stress was assessed using a validated self-reported scale such as the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) 10. Questionnaires were administered individually to each participant during the working hours. When the questionnaires were completed, they were cross checked and collected.

#### Sampling:

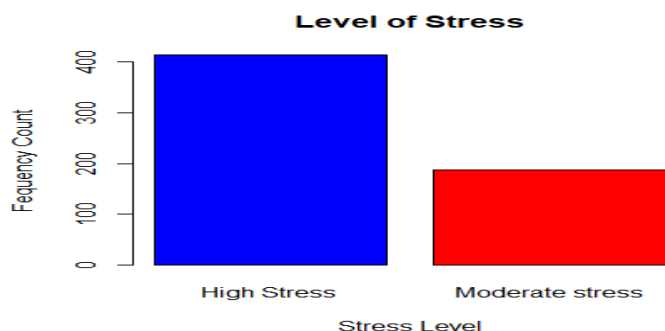
For the purpose of selecting banks, stratified sampling technique was used and three banks from strata 1 i.e. private bank were chosen and three banks from strata 2 i.e. public sector banks were chosen. Since, no informed sample frame was available for choosing the respondents from these banks so probabilistic sampling techniques could not be applied. Therefore, convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data from the respondents for the current study. 300 valid responses were taken as sample, 150 each from public and private banks. The sample size estimation was done using Cochran's (1977) formula where the population is small.

#### Statistical Tools Used for Analysis

Data was checked for reliability, normal distribution and missing values. Descriptive Statistics, T-Tests, ANOVA, CPA, EFA tools were used. All the tests were performed using R programming in R Studio Software.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The mean stress score calculated was found to be 30.34 indicating a high stress level among the bank employees. The bar plot given below depicts the same results.



**Fig.1 Mean Perceived Stress Scores of Public and Private Bank Employees.**

Also, the mean perceived stress score of the public sector bank employees was found to be 32.05. This was compared with the overall mean score using one-sample t-test. From the output, it can be inferred that  $t(350) = 5.3072$ ,  $p < 0.05$  so the mean perceived stress scores of the public sector bank employees differs significantly from the overall mean perceived stress score. This mean score varies between 31.42 to 32.68 at 95% confidence interval.

The mean perceived stress score of the private sector bank employees was found to be 27.92. This was compared with the overall mean score using one-sample t-test. From the output, it can be inferred that  $t(248) = -5.3394$ ,  $p < 0.05$  so the mean perceived stress scores of the private sector bank employees differs significantly from the overall mean perceived stress score. This mean score varies between 27.03 to 28.81 at 95% confidence interval.

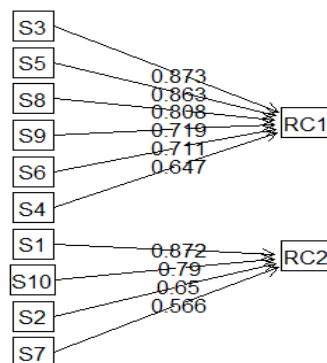
Further, the mean perceived scores of the public sector bank employees and private sector bank employees were compared using independent sample t-test. The output is given below:

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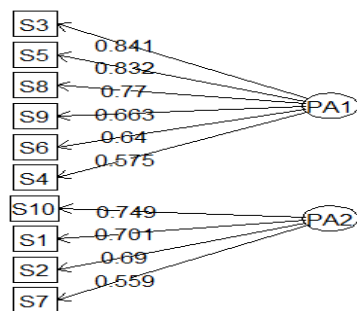
Welch Two Sample t-test
data: PSB_Total_Stress_Score by Bank.Category
t = 7.4263, df = 475.52, p-value = 5.208e-13
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means between group 1 and group 2 is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
3.036302 5.221206
sample estimates:
mean in group 1 mean in group 2
32.04843      27.91968
    
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From the above output, it can be inferred that  $t(476) = 7.4263$ ,  $p < 0.05$  indicating that the mean perceived stress score differs significantly between the public sector bank employees and private sector bank employees. This difference varies from 3.04 to 5.22 at 95% confidence interval. The perceived stress scores of the public sector bank employees are significantly higher than that of private sector bank employees. From these results it can be inferred that there exists a significant difference in the perceived level of stress among the bank employees. Further the overall mean score of Self-Efficacy was found to be 12.02 while for Helplessness it was high and found to be 18.32. When computed bank wise then the mean score of Self-Efficacy for public sector bank employees was found to be 12.70 while for the private sector bank employees, it was found to be 11.05. Similarly, the mean score of Helplessness for public sector bank employees was found to be 19.35 while for the private sector bank employees, it was found to be 16.87. From this we can infer that public sector bank employees have greater level of helplessness as compared to private sector bank employees. Upon conducting both PCA and EFA we found that Item nos3, 5, 8, 9, 6 and 4 are loading on Component (or Factor) 1 while item nos1, 2, 7 and 10 are loading on Component (or Factor) 2. This is depicted in the image below:

**Components Analysis**



**Figure 2: Principal Component Analysis Factor Analysis**



**Figure 3: Exploratory factor Analysis**

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings it can be concluded that both public and private sector bank employees experience moderate to high levels of stress. On the whole the public sector bank employees experience high stress levels than private sector employees which is further clearly depicted through their higher helplessness and lower self-efficacy factor analysis scores. A higher helplessness in employees depicts lack of control

which could be in terms of work outcomes or decision-making as well as poor link with reward systems. On the contrary lower helplessness results in clarity of achieving the results in any kind of pressured setting. Thus, it is high time that as per the SD Goal 3 “Good health and Wellbeing at all ages” bank administrations keenly focus on their employee’s wellbeing and help them to identify, understand and analyse their own capacities.

The study limits itself to identifying the perceived stress scores but it can be enhanced through considering the certain demographic variables such as age, tenure and designation. Further longitudinal or mix methods research seem to provide more insightful information in terms of identifying best practices.

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