

Emotion Regulation and Occupational Stress among Bank Employees

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ABSTRACT

The study intends to study aspects of Emotion Regulation and Occupational Stress among Bank Employees between the age group of 24- 65 years from the cities Chennai, Dubai, Bengaluru and from the state of Kerala. The sample includes 67 adults. (49 Females and 18 Males) under study. The tool used for measuring Emotion Regulation was Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) developed by J.J Gross & John (2003). The tool for measuring occupational stress was Occupational Stress Index (OSI) developed by Dr. A. K Srivastava and Dr. A. K. Singh in 1981. Descriptive statistics, Spearman's correlation and Mann Whitney U test was used to study the data. The findings showed there was no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal and occupational stress. Also showed that there was no significant relationship between expressive suppression and occupational stress. It also showed that there was no significant difference in occupational stress among males and females. However, males were found to have higher occupational stress compared to females. And there was no significant difference between Emotional Regulation on males and females. And it was learned that females tend to have higher emotion regulation compared to males.

Keywords: *Emotion Regulation, Occupational Stress, Bank Employees, Expressive Suppression, Cognitive Reappraisal, Adulthood*

Emotional regulation is defined as the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express their feelings. Emotional regulation can be automatic or controlled, or, conscious or unconscious, and might also have impacts at one or more emotion producing processes. (Gross et al. 1998). It permits an individual to carefully judge which all affective outcomes he has to embrace and which all ones he has to avoid (Wegner et al., 1993). When an individual confronts a provoking stimulus, the natural reaction of the brain is to activate their amygdala, a brain site that regulates the fight-or-flight responses or reactions (Lee & Xue, 2018). ER processes are not solely focused on negative emotions like people conceive it, but also include positive ER (Thompson et al., 2008). Cognitive reappraisal can be called as an antecedent-focused strategy. It works before the full activation of the emotion

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response. Expressive suppression is a strategy that is response-focused that intervenes once an emotion is already under way and only after the behavioural responses have already been generated fully. It is therefore, expected to require recurring efforts to manage emotional responses as they arise or emerge continually, challenging the resources of the individual.

The study focuses on bank employees involved in service jobs that imply face-to-face and telephone interactions with the customers. The study focused on the two most typical bank job-roles in the Indian context, namely bank staffs (or bank tellers), i.e., employees working at the counter, where clients go for routine bank operations (cash checks, deposit cash, pay utility bills, etc.) and bank managers or consultants, i.e., employees with a higher job position who work as intermediate-level advisors or are in charge of a small office or department (e.g., branch, personal loans, advising and selling financial products, stock exchange, foreign currency).

Occupational stress is a condition arising from the interaction between people and their jobs which is characterized by changes within individuals that forces or urges them to deviate from their normal functioning (Beehr & Newman, 1978). In circumstances where the demands and pressures placed on individual workers do not match the resources which are available, either from the organization or within the individual, it leads to stress, and it can endanger that person's health and well-being. Increased absenteeism, decreased work commitment work, increased staff turn-over, increased complaint reports from clients and customers, increased unsafe and unethical work practices are effects of occupational stress. It also results in adverse effect on the recruitment of staffs, damage to the image of the organization both among its employees and externally.

Globalization and privatisation led policies compelled or forced the banking sector to renew, reform and adjust to form a competitive edge to cope with the multinationals led society. Relationship employees have at work, and the organizational culture that is being followed are two sources or origin of stress or can be buffers that act against stress.

Bank employees are a population that suffers a lot of emotional differences and undergoes a lot of stress. Most of the time, their service goes unnoticed. It is essential for the employees to regulate their emotions and manage their stress. High levels of occupational stress and improper levels of emotion regulation can affect employees adversely. It can impair emotional, psychological, social and physiological functioning. High blood pressure, heart disorders, headaches, abdominal disturbances are some of the physical health disorders associated with it. But not many studies have been conducted on this population. So, the study focuses on the emotion regulation and occupational stress among bank employees.

Researches conducting various studies on occupational stress and well-being are increasingly interested in the role of emotion regulation in the work context. Emotion regulation was also widely investigated in the area of lifespan developmental psychology, with its findings indicating that the individual's ability to modify his/her emotions represents a domain in which their age-related growth is allowed. In the study, the literatures on aging, emotion regulation, and occupational stress and well-being are integrated, key theories and empirical findings in each of these areas are reviewed, existing researches on factors like age, emotion regulation, stress and well-being at work and created a model on effect of aging on emotion regulation and the stress process in work settings to guide future researches and studies. Based on the model, age will affect (1) what all kinds of affective work events are encountered and how often, (2) the appraisal of and initial emotional

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response events (emotion generation), and (3) the management of emotions and also adjusting with work events (emotion regulation). The model also has got implications for researchers and practitioners who want to learn, understand and facilitate successful emotion regulation and stress reduction in the workplace among different age groups of employees (Scheibe & Zacher, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the problem

To study emotion regulation and occupational stress among bank employees

Operational definition of the key concepts

- **Bank Employee**
In this study, bank employees can be operationally defined as employees who are working in the banking sector in a public or private bank. Their designation can be either bank managers or bank staffs.
- **Emotion Regulation**
Emotional Regulation refers to the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express their feeling. Emotion Regulation can be automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious, and may have effects at one or more points in the emotion producing process.
- **Occupational Stress**
Occupation or work-related stress refers to the response people have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope.

Research Design

The study on emotion regulation and occupational stress among bank employees is a correlational study with a quantitative approach which is carried out among bank employees. A correlational study is conducted to understand the relation between the two variables emotion regulation and occupational stress. The study consists of 68 bank employees. Questionnaire was circulated through Google forms as travelling to different banks were difficult during the pandemic. The results were analysed and interpreted.

Objectives

- To assess the emotional regulation and occupational stress among bank employees.
- To examine the relationship between emotional regulation and occupational stress.
- To assess the gender influence on occupational stress among bank employees.
- To assess the gender influence on emotional regulation among bank employees

Hypotheses

- H₀1: There will be no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal and occupational stress.
- H₀2: There will be no significant relationship between expressive suppression and occupational stress
- H₀3: There is no significant difference in occupational stress among males and females
- H₀4: There is no significant difference between Emotional Regulation on males and females.

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Sampling Procedure

In this study, convenience sampling method is used. The population of study consists of 68 bank employees from different places, working in both public and private sectors. The participant's age varied from 23-60 years.

Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

- **Inclusion criteria**
The Bank Employees from 3 different states (Kerala, Chennai, and Varanasi) in India were chosen for the study from private and public bank sectors. The age group of the sample were 24 years to 65 yrs. Both males and females were chosen.
- **Exclusion criteria**
Responses of private Bank Employees were taken only from one particular bank in Kerala, others were not chosen for the study. Only permanent employees were chosen for the study, temporary employees were excluded.

Tools used for the study

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) developed by Gross & John (2003). It is a 10-item scale designed to measure respondents' tendency to regulate their emotions in two ways: (1) Cognitive Reappraisal and (2) Expressive Suppression. Respondents are invited to consider statements regarding their emotional life, particularly how emotions are controlled or regulated. Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Scoring: Items 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10 make up the Cognitive Reappraisal facet. Items 2, 4, 6, 9 make up the Expressive Suppression facet.

Scoring is kept continuous. Each facet's scoring is kept separate. The questionnaire is found to have good reliability and validity. Alpha reliabilities averaged .79 for Reappraisal and .73 for Suppression.

Occupational Stress Index (OSI) developed by Dr. A. K. Srivastava and Dr. A. K. Singh in 1981. This test was designed for measuring perceived stress among employees of various occupational levels. The test contains 46 statements. These statements cover twelve dimensions of job life: Role overload, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Group and Political Pressures, Responsibility for persons, under participation, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status, Strenuous Working Conditions, and Unprofitability. The reliability index ascertained by split half (odd-even) method and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the scale as a whole were found to be 0.935 and 0.90 respectively. The validity of the instrument was determined by computing coefficient of correlation between the scale on the OSI and various measures of job attitudes and job behaviour.

Procedure of the Study

As the study was conducted during the time of the pandemic, the researcher had limitations to travel to different places for data collection. The researcher used Google forms to collect responses from participants, 68 bank employees working in different public and private banks. Before administering the questionnaire, consent was taken from the participant and their willingness for their study was taken. They were assured of confidentiality. They were asked to answer all the questions, after reading the instructions. Once the data was collected, the responses were saved which was later used for scoring.

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Ethical Consideration

- The consent from each bank employee was taken.
- Participants participated in the study voluntarily.
- Participants were given full freedom to quit at any point they felt uncomfortable.
- Adequate level of confidentiality of the data collected was given to the participant.
- Respect for the dignity of research participants were prioritized.
- In the research, it was assured that no harm was done to the participants.

Statistical Techniques

The data collected from the participants were entered into the excel sheet. For further process, the data was categorized and then the application Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used. The data entered on excel sheet was analysed in SPSS table. In the study, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis.

- Descriptive Statistics included Mean and standard deviation. The normality was checked.
- Inferential Statistics – Spearman correlation and Mann Whitney U test were used.

To find out the relationship between emotion regulation and occupational stress, this technique was used.

RESULTS

The study intended to analyse the relationship between Emotion Regulation and Occupational Stress among Bank Employees between 23-60 years of age group from the country of India. Firstly, the descriptive statistics, the mean and standard deviation was found. Then normality was checked for each variable and it was that the data were not normally distributed and hence non-parametric test was used. Spearman correlation and Mann-Whitney U test was used for the analysis.

Table 4.1 Mean and Standard Deviation of Emotion Regulation and Occupational Stress among Bank Employees.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Emotion Regulation	51.54	9.381	67
Occupational Stress	132.88	12.325	67

Occupational Stress has higher Mean and Standard Deviation than Emotional Regulation.

H01: There will be no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal and occupational stress.

Table 4.2 Correlation between cognitive reappraisal and occupational stress among bank employees.

	N	rho	p
Cognitive reappraisal, occupational stress	67	0.192	0.120

The correlation coefficient for cognitive reappraisal is 0.192. The significance value is 0.120, thus $p > 0.05$, here the null hypothesis is accepted. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal and occupational stress. There was a total of 67 samples of bank employees. The spearman correlation value is 0.192

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which shows a positive less correlation. Here we can see that there is no relation between the variables and there is a less amount of positive correlation too.

H02: There will be no significant relationship between expressive suppression and occupational stress.

Table 4.3 Correlation between expressive suppression and occupational stress among bank employees

Expressive suppression	N	rho	p
Occupational stress	67	-0.120	0.332

The correlation coefficient for expressive suppression is -.120. The significance value is 0.332, thus $p > 0.05$, here the null hypothesis is accepted. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal and occupational stress. There was a total of 67 samples of bank employees. The spearman correlation value is -.120 which shows a negative less correlation. Here we can see that there is no relation between the variables and there is a less amount of negative correlation too.

H03: There is no significant difference in occupational stress among males and females.

Table 4.4 Comparing occupational stress among males and females.

	N	Mean Rank	U	Sig
Males	18	39.44	343.000	0.165
Females	49	32.00		

The U and the significance value are 34.000 and 0.165, thus $p > 0.05$, here the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant difference in occupational stress among males and females. The mean rank of occupational stress among males and females were found to be 39.44 and 32.00 respectively. There was a total of 67 samples of bank managers. There is a difference in the number of male and female samples, as there are only 18 male samples and females' samples are 49. Here, though the null hypothesis is accepted, it is found from the mean rank analysis that mean ranks of males is higher than that of females. So, it is interpreted that males tend to have higher occupational stress compared to females.

H04: There is no significant difference between Emotional Regulation on males and females.

Table 4.5 Comparing Emotional Regulation among males and females.

	N	Mean Rank	U	Sig
Males	18	26.75	310.500	0.065
Females	49	36.66		

The U and the significance value are 310.500 and 0.065, thus $p > 0.05$, here the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant difference in emotion regulation among males and females. The mean rank of emotion regulation among males and females were found to be 26.75 and 36.66 respectively. There was a total of 67 samples of bank managers. There is a difference in the number of male and female samples, as there are only 18 male samples and females' samples are 49. Here, though the null hypothesis is accepted, it is

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found from the mean rank analysis that mean ranks of females is higher than that of males. So, it is interpreted those females tend to have higher emotion regulation compared to males.

DISCUSSION

The overall purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between emotion regulation and occupational stress among bank employees and to understand how both the variables have an impact or effect on each other. The study found that there was no significant relationship between the two variables, emotion regulation and occupational stress among bank employees. The null hypotheses that there is no significant relationship between expressive suppression and occupational stress, cognitive reappraisal and occupational stress was accepted. Most of the studies shows that there is a significant relationship between emotion regulation and occupational stress. As studies proved, these variables are positively correlated. Contrary to this finding, the results of a study found that emotional regulation training is effective in reducing occupational stress of critical care nurses and that they have a relationship (Saedpanah et al., 2016). There is no significant difference in occupational stress among male and female employees. It was clear from the results that males have more occupational stress compared to females, but the difference was not significant. So the results proved that the null hypothesis there was no significant difference in occupational stress among males and females. Contrary to this finding, the results of a study found that male and female officers did not report significantly different levels of occupational stress and burnout.

(McCarty et al., 2007). The study also found that there is no significant difference between Emotion Regulation on males and females, which suggests that males and females have similar levels of emotion regulation. From the results, it was found that females tend to have higher emotion regulation compared to males. This clearly indicates that the null hypothesis there is no significant difference between Emotional Regulation on males and females was accepted. Contrary to this finding, the results of a study found that that men and women did not differ on measures of emotional reactivity. In addition, both genders reported comparable decreases in negative experience when using cognitive reappraisal (McRae et al., 2008).

Summary

The purpose of the study was to analyse aspects of emotion regulation and occupational stress among bank employees, from different parts of the nation, working in both public and private banks. The statement of the problem was to study emotion regulation and occupational stress among bank employees. A total of 67 samples were collected, 18 males and 49 females. The hypotheses were H01 - There will be no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal and occupational stress, H02 - There will be no significant relationship between expressive suppression and occupational stress, H03 - There is no significant difference in occupational stress among males and females, H04 - There is no significant difference between Emotional Regulation on males and females. The data collected was scored according to the manual and the data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Firstly, the normality was checked, since the data was not normal, nonparametric tests were used i.e., Spearman Correlation and Mann Whitney U test. The results and discussion were made to find out if there was significant difference or not.

CONCLUSION

The major purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between emotion regulation and occupational stress among bank employees, how an employee's emotion regulation helps them in managing occupational stress. Based on the findings of the study, following conclusion notes were made:

- There was no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal and occupational stress.
- There was no significant relationship between expressive suppression and occupational stress.
- There was no significant difference in occupational stress among males and females. It was found that males tend to have higher occupational stress compared to females.
- There was no significant difference between Emotional Regulation on males and females. It was found that females tend to have higher emotion regulation compared to males.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

From the present study, we see that there is influence of occupational stress and emotion regulation among gender of bank employees. Males were found to have higher occupational stress compared to females, while females were found to have higher emotion regulation compared to men. In future, more kinds of training programs can be introduced which can help in reducing occupational stress and improving emotion regulation. Thereby, many psychological, emotional, physiological and social problems can be resolved. Occupational stress and poor emotion regulation can lead to many adverse health problems in the employees. Due to the pandemic and lockdown though some of the employees got more time to relax and spend with families, some other employees had to work amidst the pandemic. They found it even more stressful to work in an environment where they interacted with many people each day. However, engaging in gardening, spending time with family, meditation can help in reducing occupational stress and improving emotion regulation. 6.4

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Participants had to fill the questionnaire online, this might have affected the concentration of the participants resulting in less accuracy in responses,
 - Both the questionnaires had 56 questions in total. Since the questionnaire was too lengthy, the participants found it difficult to fill the questionnaire.
 - The number of male participants were 18, while the number of female participants were 49, this could have an impact on the results.
 - The chosen samples were small, this could impact in sample fluctuations. 6.5
- Suggestions for future studies
- The study can be implemented in a larger population in future studies.
 - The conduction of a pre-test and post-test after conducting a training for the bank employees could be useful.
 - Extending the study to Bank Employees in different parts of the Country could be more useful.
 - The advancement of the world and the enhancement of materialism leads to various mental health problems. Thus, it is essential to focus on positive attributes that develop spirituality and promotes well-being.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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