Occupational Stress among Bus Drivers and Its Remedial Measures-A study of Delhi Transport Corporation

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Abstract

Transport is important as it facilitates trade, exchange and travel. Transportation plays a vital role in the economy of India. Effective, affordable, smooth and coordinated transportation is the spine of any country and India is no exception. Drivers are one of the most important assets of transportation department of any state. Bus drivers are the public face of their organizations. Properly trained and well-motivated drivers are essential for providing an excellent service to the commuters. Occupational stress can affect the perception, motivation and job satisfaction level of the bus drivers. The present study is an attempt to identify and analysis the factors responsible for stress among DTC bus drivers and how it can be coped up.

Key words: Occupational stress, Cope-up Strategy, Stress Management.

Introduction

Stress is the silent killer. Stress is the “wear and tear” experienced by our mind and body and to cope up with the continuously changing environment. Stress is the reaction of people when excessive pressure or demand placed on them. Stress arises when people worry that they can’t cope up with the situation. In other words, Stress is defined as the function of pressure and resources i.e. S= P>R.

Depression, anxiety, worry, tension, anger, tense are the few examples of stress. There are various factors inside and outside the organization which creates stress on the employees. This may be termed as Occupational Stress.

The degree of stress is inversely proportional and related to productivity of the employee. As the stress increases the productivity of the employee decreases. This entire study is focuses on the various factors which affects the productivity or output of the employees and overall functioning of the organization.

Bus drivers need to show empathy towards passengers along with concentrating on driving the bus. Their physical and psychological health, working hours, Day/night shift, Route of the bus, duty timings etc. play crucial role. Safety of travelers and other road users, Government regulations, are other concerned issues. Fatigue, poor cabin comforts, traffic congestion, adverse weather conditions,
mechanical fault in the vehicle, rude demanding passengers can lead to unfavorable situations, the consequences of which has to be borne by the passengers and bus drivers. Probability of road accidents is more frequent with bus drivers having eye-sight problems and sleeping problems.

Bus drivers need to maintain the balance between the all aforesaid factors to retain the safety of the passengers. The present study is an attempt to find out whether the bus drivers feel stressed while fulfilling their duty.

**Objectives of the study**

To identify the factors responsible for stress among DTC bus drivers.
To examine the impact of working environment and health problems faced by DTC bus drivers.
To analyse the stress coping-up strategies to prevent it among DTC bus drivers.

**Methodology of the study**

DTC have 46 bus depots, out of which 18 bus depots are of the old DTC buses while remaining 28 have low floor buses. Low floor buses include air-conditioned Red-Line buses, Low floor green buses and Orange buses. Air-conditioned Red Buses and Green buses are handled by DTC while Orange buses are handled jointly by Delhi Integrated Multi-Model Transit system Limited (DIMTS) and DTC.

**Research Design:** The present study is exploratory in nature. Exploratory research provides a better understanding of the existing problem but it does not provide a conclusive result. It is also known as Grounded theory approach or Interpretive research because it is used to provide the answers of the questions like what, why and how.

**Sample Size:** The present study was conducted on stress among bus drivers in Delhi transport corporation area. A sample of 100 drivers was used who were plying within the National Capital Delhi. The bus drivers plying outside Delhi were excluded (Delhi- NCR was excluded).

**Data collection method:** Data for the present study is collected through primary data collection method. Structured and preformed questionnaire was used in the present study. Data has been collected from the bus drivers available at 4 bus depots of DTC viz Najafgarh bus depot, Mundka bus depot, Kair bus depot and Dwarka bus depot using convenient sampling technique.

**Data analysis method:** Questionnaire includes socio-demographic profile like age, experience (number of years of service), education etc. General and specific information regarding sleep hours, working hours, frequency of road accidents by bus drivers, concern for safe driving, bad habits etc. has been included in the questionnaire. Collected data has been analysed using MS Excel and SPSS software. 5-point Likert Scale has been used in the present study.
Analysis of Data

Data collected by the bus drivers through questionnaires in the present study can be summarized as follows:

Factors responsible for creating stress among DTC bus drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Very Rarely</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Now and Then</th>
<th>More Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rest during working hours</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Long route distance</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Pressure on timely route completion (even in traffic jams)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Deteriorating health conditions</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Work overload</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Paid less</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Recognition from others</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Difficulty in getting holidays</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Concern for driving</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Relationship with superiors</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Relationship with colleagues</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Fatigue/Health issues</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Bad passengers behavior</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Poor cabin conditions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Monotony of job</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Poor management b/w work and family commitments</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Quality Sleeping time/Trouble with sleep</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table depicts the various reasons responsible for creating stress among bus drivers. It includes reasons from rest during working hours to suffering from drinking habits of the bus drivers.

**Suggestions to overcome stress**

By following the below said suggestions, bus drivers can come out of the stress, they feel during their job.

DTC should organize eye check-up camps and health check-up camps for the bus drivers time to time. That practice must be followed regularly.

DTC should take strict action against those bus drivers (defaulters only) who don’t follow the speed limits on the roads and create a harmful situation for the safety of the passengers. This will motivate other bus drivers also to follow proper speed limits while driving.

Effective training should be provided to bus drivers and conductors on how to deal with rude passengers during travelling. This will help in reducing the mental stress of the bus drivers.

Senior level officers should also give due recognition and praise to the bus drivers. They should implement reward system also.

The workload of the drivers should be taken care of. They must not be overloaded with work. It will reduce their stress level. Overloading with work may be one of the reasons for deteriorating the health of the bus drivers and therefore creating stress among them.

Bus drivers should not be restrained from taking holidays when necessary. Alternate arrangements should be done by DTC for the concerned bus driver.

There must be adequate rest rooms and other facilities created by DTC for the bus drivers.

**Conclusion**

Bus drivers and conductors face more stress as compared to workers on other jobs because of safety of passengers, road conditions, Bus union policies, obeying traffic rules, maintaining the work-life balance etc. These days, bus drivers of DTC can be seen using their earphones of mobile phone to reduce the work stress (which may be very dangerous for the whole bus passengers including him). Bus drivers may reschedule their work or discuss their stress creating issues with their family and friends. Stress is the mental condition which has to be handled by the bus drivers themselves with the cooperation from their peer group, friends and relatives.
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