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**SELF CARE PRACTICES AND WORK PRESSURE AMONG EMPLOYEES OF BANKING SECTOR, COUNTY OF
NAKURU; KENYA**

Catherine Njoki & Dr. Dennis Juma, PhD

SELF CARE PRACTICES AND WORK PRESSURE AMONG EMPLOYEES OF BANKING SECTOR, COUNTY OF NAKURU; KENYA

Catherine Njoki ¹ & Dr. Dennis Juma, PhD ²

¹ Master Student, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya

² Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is paramount in business circles because it brings about positive outcomes for organizations. Relationship of employees to their organizations materialized through withdrawal behavior or commitment to the organization. Engaged workers appeared less stressed and more satisfied in a personal setting. Work Pressure has been identified as a significant hindrance to professional's performance. Unfortunately, Work Pressure cannot be eliminated in organizations, but it can only be managed with different coping practices. Hence, the objective of the study was to examine the effect of self-care practices and work pressure among employees of banking sector, county of Nakuru; Kenya. This study used descriptive survey research design and the target population were the respondents from the banks within Nakuru County; Kenya. The study employed the use of structured questionnaire on collection of primary data from employees of financial institutions in the banking sector, Nakuru Town, County of Kakamega; Kenya. Pilot study was done on financial institutions, banking sector, in Eldoret Town; Kenya in order to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments. The study descriptive and inferential statistics was analyzed by use of SPSS software version 24, further; a linear regression equation model was developed to test the relationships between the variables. The results of the findings indicated, self-care practices had a significant influence on Work Pressure, the study recommends for the banking sector to embrace the use of self-care practices since when applied correctly it improves the understanding of work pressure on employees that results into austerity measures. The study recommends for further studies on the same considering same variables but different methodologies

Key words: *Self – Care Practices, Coping Practices, Work Pressure*

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, employee's performance has received wide attention in literature and research due to its importance on consideration that every organization aims to achieve high performance (Kristie, 2017). In the study by Woods (2014) on employee performance, performance is influenced by a number of internal and external factors which include personal issues, job suitability, motivation to succeed, working conditions, job training and performance feedback. Poor performance can result from unfulfilled external or internal factors. In the study by Yildirim (2015) on work pressure, multiple aspects of working life contribute to work pressure. Aspects of the work itself can be stressful, namely work overload, Overwork is noted to be one of the causes of occupational work pressure in most studies. According Anwar (2019), work overload is a major source of exhaustion that in turn, is at the root of burnout. In combination with work overload, pressures on the job such as too much supervision, hierarchical behaviors, and strict rules can also add to burnout. Obeitat (2018) stipulates, burnout can contribute to occupational stress by its overwhelming sense of exhaustion, feelings of cynics, and detachment and lack of accomplishment.

In the study by Lawson (2019) on work pressure, employee engagement is paramount in business circles because it brings positive outcomes for organizations; hence it indicates the relationship of employees to their organizations materialized through withdrawal behavior or commitment to the organization. Joo and Lee (2017) asserted, engaged workers appeared less stressed and more satisfied in a personal setting as supported by workers behavior on less health care, taking fewer sick days, improved productivity and staying longer with their organizations than their less engaged counterparts. According to Lavoie (2019), dissatisfied employees cost a lot to many organizations in terms of non-productivity. In the study by Shafferet (2016) on employee performance in association with work

pressure at work place, expected transformation of the economic atmosphere cutting across borders, advances in technology, and the ensuing intense competitive markets have created enormous pressure on organizational leaders to rethink how they manage their workforce.

Leung *et al.*, (2017) and Enshassi *et al.*, (2018) classified the practices for coping into a problem focused coping behavior and emotion-focused behavior. A problem-focused coping strategy is like the strategies utilized for solving a problem. Therefore, it is concerned with problem-focused efforts channeled at understanding the problem, providing alternative solutions and considering the solutions regarding its cost and benefits.

Shah (2014) contemplates; overlapping of different cultures has developed a new class of people, comprehensive citizens with comprehensive attitudes, tastes, and networks that have effects on working conditions. Guthrie (2018) found the profound differences in ideologies were an issue, especially when companies often considered engagements as a management issue rather than a relationship. Helmle (2019) embraced; organizational leaders should move from far-reaching notions of conserving nature and fascinations with splendor to a rational structure provided by the concept of human sustainability and ease the work pressure on employees. Greenhaus and Allen (2017), embraced successful leaders should engage, motivate, and retain outstanding employees while simultaneously controlling costs. Compared to conventional benefits options, innovative benefits such as flexible schedules or insurance benefits can provide increased value to workers at smaller costs to the employer.

According to Lee, Elke and Dobison (2019), the management of organizations should develop coping mechanisms to assist the employees manage the work pressure with ease. More so, the scholar also noted, providing employees with training and

resources to perform a job increases employee morale and motivation. Employee involvement has optimistic outcomes for both employees and organizations because these practices motivate workers; hence, reinforced practices build workers' skills and provide authority to make decisions. Anwar (2019) stated the relation between creativity and implementation regulates individuals' motivation to put their ideas into practice and their ability to achieve strong relationships within an organization; hence among the coping practices that the management might use include; social support, self care, confrontive and re-appraisal practices.

In the study by Lovaš *et al.*, (2014) on employees' stress with performance at work place, Self-care is a technical term, used in many fields of science in a variety of ways; hence, a person's ability to take care of themselves in areas of everyday life is considered a basic and natural disposition of the individual. Self-care represents an interconnected multi-dimensional concept consisting of mental and physical health leading to an improvement in the quality of life of an individual. According to Tartakovsky (2015) self-care includes several components, including physical, emotional, spiritual, social and recreational areas, the paradox of this phenomenon may be the fact that while one person classifies a situation as self-care, another person may classify it as a stress-full one.

Promotion of self-care to ameliorate work related stress has become a significant aspect of contemporary workplaces in organizations; hence, belongs to a discourse of wellness that has powerfully influenced advanced Western societies with a focus on the promotion of well-being; fitness, happiness, mental health, and productivity (Shamain, 2017). Part of that discourse identifies work-related pressure or burnout as the problem to which self-care is the solution. Much of the Human Resources research literature continues to represent the problem in natural psychological and physiological dispositions like "the fear or fight" model of stress (Anwar, 2019). There is also a

preoccupation with locating the problem with the individual and prescribing individual therapeutic remedies like massage or counseling as part of a "self-care" approach among the employees for easing of work pressure. More significant is a reluctance to identify the impact of still dominant approaches to work practice, organizational culture, and management practices referred to as "New Public Management" as a possible source of stress and ill health (Faiza & Nazir,2015).

One of the characteristics of work pressure is that it is dynamic in nature and varies from individual to individual and more evidently from organization to organization; hence, self-care coping among the employees aligns with the environment (Tóthová & Žiaková, 2017). An essential part of working in the demanding, dynamically changing conditions of the helping profession is uncertain, a risky environment, time pressures and the serious consequences of one's decisions (Au & Ahmed, 2018). According to Helmle (2019), circumstances underline the importance of the factors entering into the process of decision making related to the emotional survival of persons in problematic situations (Gurňáková *et al.*, 2013). However, it is important that the individual with a high level of self-care can effectively help other people, which are more than desirable in the field having work pressure (Ahmed, 2015).

Self-care could become an essential part of good practice at work place, where workers care among themselves and get along under work pressure, professionals encounter many problems in their day-to-day work that pose high demands on their psyche, so it is very important that they find time to care for themselves (Šlosár, Šoltésová and Plavnická, 2017). Self-care is very important among the employees for performance and personal growth purpose; hence, the employees should point out stressful environment to which they work and more importantly focus on the behavior, survival and inner well-being of themselves in the context of his/her work activities (Hon & Chan, 2019). On the contrary, Kristie (2017) considers further training of

employees in the area of self-care important; hence, organizing of a variety of lectures to teach the correct use of self-care strategies, which can significantly improve the physical, psychological, occupational, spiritual and interpersonal areas to minimize work pressure. More so, an expert working in the field of helping professions is not only a professional but also a balanced individual.

Under Self Care, helping each other professionally include a variety of positive and negative consequences, in general, positive effects of helping are called compassion satisfaction, the negative called compassion fatigue (Köverová, Ráčzová, 2017). However, if self-care is not sufficient, a person may experience adverse socio-pathological phenomena (e.g. burnout syndrome, fatigue from helping, work dissatisfaction) (Šiňanská, Kočíšová, 2017). According to literature, it is a phenomenon that often appears in conjunction with work pressure, particularly and mostly when there is more work load that the employee cannot bear; hence, occurs on the basis of activity level at work, administrative burden and bureaucracy (Bianchi, Schonfeld, & Laurent, 2015). When the Self Care fails it leads to burnout syndrome, which is described as a state of drought, when an individual feels overloaded, immobilized and blocked then work pressure becomes overwhelming reflecting; first signs, a change in one's behavior, concerned person is involved in everything, but they are always restless, short-tempered and cantankerous. They keep a distance from other people, who are perceived as a disruptive element. They have a growing pile of work, feel disgust towards other people and often respond gruffly and crudely (Grün, 2014).

According to Prieß (2015), the inability to perceive oneself, one's own limits and needs that according to them do not exist at all, or only marginally, is a strong prediction of burnout syndrome. The link is suggested by recommendations in the field of prevention mentioning a diverse work regimen, good social background, realistic expectations on oneself, rigorous separation of professional and

private life, optimal degree of personal involvement in relation to the client, satisfactory assertiveness, setting of priorities and delegating tasks to other people.

Statement of the Problem

Workplace pressure come at high cost to organizations as increasing work pressure greatly affect employee's productivity as well as the organizations overall performance. Mostly staff turnover increases the recruitment costs and loss of skills by the organization when the employees are overwhelmed by work pressure. Kinyita (2015) asserts Social Support Practices leads to stress which is the cause of all the problems of the modern world; hence affects both the organization and the economy as a whole. Kilungu (2015) contemplates prolonged or intense work pressure can have a negative impact on an individual's mental and physical health. It is for such reasons that the experience of work pressure has been subject to a large amount of research for the reason of finding out the coping measures that could be employed by organizations for ease of working among employees.

Juma (2015) opines the ultimate performance of organizations depends on the performance of its employees, which in turn depends on numerous factors. These factors can be related to work or family or both. Omolo (2015) asserts work pressure enhances inefficiency and thus, the productivity of an employee decreases. The satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the workers affects the performance of the organization. According to Kiruja and Mukuru (2018), there is growing evidence that current trends in Self - Care Practices may be eroding levels of job satisfaction and directly damaging the physical and mental health of employees; hence supported by radical changes in the world of business, like factors such as globalization, information technology, world business competitiveness, and scarcity of natural resources change employee's outlook of how a good company is defined. Most of the scholars among them; Kirija and Mukuru (2018) carried out

studies on how stress impacts on employees' performance and more so, recommended for further studies, however little studies have been carried out, specifically zeroing on how work pressure can be managed by Self - Care Practices among the employees within the organization. Basing on these scholars' findings, it gives to a rise of a research gap that necessitates for the study to be carried out.

Objective;

To evaluate the effect of Self Care practices on Work Pressure among employees of banking sector, County of Nakuru; Kenya

Research Hypothesis

H₀₂: Self Care practices do not significantly affect Work Pressure among employees of banking sector, County of Nakuru; Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical review;

Michigan Model

Michigan Model is based on a framework established by French and Kahn at the University of Michigan in 1962, and is sometimes known as the ISR model (Institute of Social Research) the Social Environment Model, or the Role Stress Approach. In the study by Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison and Pinneau (1975) on stress management, Michigan Model places much emphasis on the individual's own subjective perceptions of stressors. According to Moeno-Jimenez *et al.*, (2009), environmental stressors, such as role ambiguity, conflict, lack of participation, job security, workload, lack of challenge and work pressure are subjectively perceived and personality variables, demographics, and social support moderate these perceptions to lead to health outcomes. Alkubaisi (2015) asserts the Role issues, such as role conflict, role ambiguity and role expectations are particularly central stressors, also known as the Role Stress Approach. The model was refined by Hurrell and McLaney (1988) from the U.S. National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health to result in what is

known as the NIOSH model. Huang, Feurstein, and Sauter (2002) contemplated individual differences, acute reactions, and illness outcomes reflect the work pressure that at the end affects the employees adversely in that without coping mechanisms the individual performance of employees decreases affecting the overall performance of the organization

In the field of management, workplace stress might result from work pressure which can be exhibited through work load, work place conflict, work ambiguity which are the core of research as the costs to organizations and employees (Arshadi and Damiri, 2013; Webster *et al.*, 2010). Farler and Broady-Preston (2012) suggested that a work-place is a community of its own; hence employees derive their sense of identity and belongingness from it. Work pressure in the workplace would therefore affect employees significantly and ultimately the performance of the entire organization would also be at stake. It is on this premise the current study will adopt Michigan Model to expound the relationship between work pressure and coping mechanisms among the employees of the organizations.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Theory Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory states that people have a pyramid hierarchy of needs that they will satisfy from bottom to top. He proposed that motivation is the result of a person's attempt at fulfilling five (5) basic needs; physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory remains relevant in every sector of our business today as its best analyzes needs, where the lower order needs (physiological and safety needs) may be linked to employee performance. Every new organization passes through this lower order stage in which they struggle with their basic survival needs.

At the third level of the Maslow's hierarchy, social needs would correspond to the formation of organized roles within the organization into distinct units, depicting the human resource management

function which resonates according to the tone set by organizational culture. This study finds this theory relevant in studying the influence of coping mechanisms and work pressure in Kenya.

Psychological Stress Theory (Lazarus’s Model)

The theory asserts two concepts are central to any psychological stress theory: appraisal, that is individuals' evaluation of the significance of what is happening for their well-being, and coping, that is individuals' efforts in thought and action to manage specific demands (Lazarus 1993). In this theory, stress is regarded as a relational concept that is, stress is not defined as a specific kind of external stimulation or a specific pattern of physiological, behavioral, or subjective reactions.

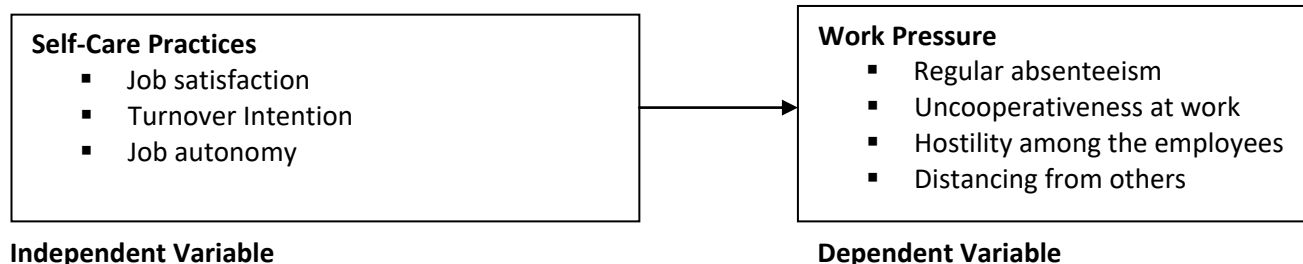
The method used by Lazarus was based on specific efforts, both behavioral and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events. The method was very clear; the scholar had distinguished between the two general coping strategies; problem-solving strategies being efforts to do something active to alleviate stressful circumstances, whereas emotion-focused coping strategies being efforts to regulate the emotional consequences of stressful or potentially stressful events. Therefore, researcher concludes that coping has two major functions; dealing with the problem that is causing the distress (problem-focused coping) and regulating emotion (emotion-focused coping). Obviously, Problem-focused coping is the use of specific activities

getting the task accomplished, whereas emotion-focused coping is the use of activities to feel better about the task.

If the students applied for instant the method of problem-focused coping for a task that was beyond their accomplishment, they would only frustrate themselves and become distressed. Given such an impossible task, they would do better to joke about it, or discuss their feelings with a friend. Conversely, if a task can be accomplished but they are uncertain by joking and partying with friends, they are employing emotion-focus coping when they should have engaged in activities to get the task done. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1986), problem focused coping includes confrontative Coping, Seeking Social Support, plan full Problem-Solving, and Seeking Social Support. Whereas, emotion focused coping includes Self-Control, Seeking Social Support, Distancing, Positive Appraisal, Accepting Responsibility, and Escape/Avoidance.

Coping Mechanisms used by Lazarus, *et al.*, (1986) for problem focused coping included; Emotion focused coping; Confrontative Coping, Seeking Social Support, plan full Problem, Solving Self-Control, Seeking Social Support, Distancing, Positive Appraisal, Accepting Responsibility, Escape/Avoidance. According to this current study, the main reason is how coping mechanisms can be applied among employees where there exists work pressure at place of work; hence, the theory of Lazarus (1986) would be well placed.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Descriptive research survey design was therefore used to determine an association between the conceptualized independent and dependent variables as shown in the study's conceptual model.

Target Population: This study targeted 145 employees of the registered banking institutions in Nakuru Town.

Sampling Frame: A sampling frame is a list of all the items in the population (Cooper & Schinder, (2007). That is, it is a complete list of everyone or everything you want to study or a list of things that you draw a sample from. In this study it consisted of senior officers belonging to registered banking institutions in Nakuru Town.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: The study sample size was determined by taking up the whole target population since it was small and manageable. Census technique was applied on the eighty respondents.

Data collection Instruments: Primary data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaires had structured questions. These questionnaires were structured and designed in multiple choice formats. Section one introduced the researcher, topic of research and its purpose to the respondent.

Data Processing and analysis: Data collected from the field was coded, cleaned, tabulated and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of specialized Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). version 24 software. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages as well as measures of central tendency (means) and dispersion (standard deviation) was used. Data was also organized into graphs and tables for easy reference.

Further, inferential statistics such as regression and correlation analyses were used to determine both the nature and the strength of the relationship

between the dependent and independent variables. Correlation analysis is usually used together with regression analysis to measure how well the regression line explains the variation of the dependent variable. The linear and multiple regression plus correlation analyses were based on the association between two (or more) variables. SPSS version 24 is the analysis computer software that was used to compute statistical data.

Study conceptualized Regression Model;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

$$Y = \text{Work Pressure}$$

$$\beta_0 = \text{Constant}$$

$$X_1 = \text{Self-Care practices}$$

$$\{\beta_1\} = \text{Beta coefficients}$$

$$\epsilon = \text{the error term}$$

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

The study involved 108 questionnaires being dispatched for data collection, 96 questionnaires were returned completely filled, representing a response rate of 88.9 % which was good for generalizability of the research findings to a wider population.

Descriptive Statistics

Self-Care Practice and Work Pressure

These are summarized responses on whether Self Care influences Work Pressure among employees of banking sector, Nakuru Town; Kenya. The descriptive results are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics; Self Care

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std Dev
1. Do you create a good atmosphere in relationships with people at work?	14(18.2)	36(46.7)	9(11.7)	11(14.3)	7(9.1)	3.51	0.931
2. Do you respect the expected role in relation to your colleague?	13(16.8)	32(41.6)	12(15.6)	9(11.7)	11(14.3)	3.36	0.934
3. Do you use your own coping strategies to manage workload while working with client?	11(14.3)	39(50.6)	7(9.1)	10(13.0)	10(13.0)	3.49	0.923
4. Do you use professional growth to cope with workload?	12(15.5)	37(48.1)	11(14.3)	8(10.4)	9(11.7)	3.45	0.912
5. Do you regularly switch between work activities?	15(19.5)	31(40.2)	9(11.7)	10(13.0)	12(15.6)	3.39	0.929
6. Do you always have enough sleep?	14(18.2)	36(46.8)	10(13.0)	9(11.7)	8(10.3)	3.55	0.942
Valid list wise=96							
Grand mean =3.46							

From table 1, most respondents agreed (46.7%) and strongly agreed (18.2%) that the respondents create good atmosphere for working with others, which also is supported by 41.6% of respondents who agreed that they respect the expected role in relation to their colleagues. This implies a cordial relationship among the employees.

More so, 50.6% of respondents agreed that they use their own coping strategies to manage the workload, while 48.1% of respondents also agreed that they use their own profession growth to deal with the work load. Further, 40.2% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed (19.5%) that respondent can switch on work activities, implying the can easily work on any given activity within the organization. Lastly, most respondents agreed (46.8%) and strongly agreed (18.2%) (Supported by the grand mean = 3.46= 4 = agree) that generally, they normally have enough sleep. This is indicating that the respondents need to rest after heavy work.

In the study by Lovaš *et al.*, (2014) on employees' stress with performance at work place, Self-care is a technical term, used in many fields of science in a variety of ways; hence, a person's ability to take care of themselves in areas of everyday life is

considered a basic and natural disposition of the individual. Self-care represents an interconnected multi-dimensional concept consisting of mental and physical health leading to an improvement in the quality of life of an individual. According to Tartakovsky (2015) self-care includes several components, including physical, emotional, spiritual, social and recreational areas, the paradox of this phenomenon may be the fact that while one person classifies a situation as self-care, another person may classify it as a stress-full one.

Inferential Statistics

Correlation

The correlation analysis presented in Table 2 focuses on the relationship between Self-Care Practices and Work Pressure. The findings reveal significant correlations exists.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

		Self -Care	Work Pressure
Self -Care	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	77	
Work Pressure	Pearson Correlation	.562**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	77	77

Findings showed that there is a strong positive correlation between work pressure and Self-care practices, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.562 ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that higher levels of Self Care practices are associated with improved Work Pressure.

Linear influence of Self Care Practices on Work Pressure

This tested the direct influence of Self Care Practices on Work Pressure among employees of the banking sector, Nakuru Town, Kenya. The results are shown table 3.

Linear regression results

Table 3: Direct influence of Self Care Practices on Work Pressure

Model Summary										
						Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig.	F Change
1	.753 ^a	.568	.562	.80708	.568	98.422	1	96		.000
ANOVA ^b										
Model			Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F			Sig.	
1	Regression		64.110	1	64.110	98.422				.000 ^a
	Residual		48.854	96	.651					
	Total		112.964	96						
Coefficients ^a										
		Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients					
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t			Sig.		
1	(Constant)	.921	.269		3.422			.001		
	Self -Care	.801	.081	.753	9.921			.000		

a. Dependent Variable: Work Pressure

From table 3, the model summary shows that $R^2 = 0.568$; implying that 56.8% variations in the Work Pressure among employees of the banking sector, Nakuru Town; Kenya is explained by Self Care Practices while other factors not in the study model

accounts for 43.2% of variation in Work Pressure among employees of the banking sector, Nakuru Town; Kenya. Further, coefficient analysis shows that Self Care Practice has positive significant influence on Work Pressure in the banking sector (β

= 0.801 (0.081); at $p < .01$). This implies that a single improvement in Self Care will lead to 0.801 unit increase in the Work Pressure among employees of the banking sector; Nakuru Town; Kenya. Therefore, the linear regression equation is;

$$(ii) y = 0.921 + 0.801X_2$$

Where;

y = Work Pressure among Employees

X_2 = Self Care

Study hypothesis (H₀₁) stated that Self Care Practices does not significantly influence Work Pressure of the banking sector of the Nakuru County; Kenya. Linear regression results indicate that Self Care Practices significantly influence Work Pressure ($\beta = 0.801$ (0.081) at $p < 0.05$). **Hypothesis is therefore rejected.** The results indicate that that a single improvement in Self Care Practices will lead to 0.801 unit increase in Work Pressure of the banking sector of the Nakuru Town; Kenya.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This tested the influence of Self Care on Work Pressure among Employees of the banking sector, Kakamega Town; Kenya. The study found that Self

Care Practices significantly influenced Work Pressure among employees. The study results support earlier researches that found that an improvement in the Self Care would respond well on Work Pressure among employees of the organization. However, other researchers found a reverse understanding but the majority of the scholars supported the existence of the relationship between Self Care and Work Pressure among employees.

Banking sector organizations that could effectively apply, Self- Care Practices, possess good ground of minimizing on related Work Pressure problems among the employees.

The study recommends that financial institutions should embrace the use Coping Practices on related work pressure problem matters among employees since it has an influence of easing the pressure among the organization's employees.

Areas for further research

The study encourages similar study to be done on other organizations both private and public, using different methods on similar variables

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