



Organizational Behaviour

Elixir Org. Behaviour 144(2020) 54537-54546

Elixir
ISSN: 2229-712X

Employee Engagement and Commitment in Kakamega County Government in Kenya

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 5 June 2020;

Received in revised form:
30 June 2020;

Accepted: 10 July 2020;

Keywords

Employee Engagement,
Employee Commitment.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of employee engagement on commitment in the county government of Kakamega in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design with a target sample of 313 respondents drawn from a sampling comprising top management, middle management, and lower cadre employees in 12 sub counties within the county. The sampling frame was obtained by using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. From each stratum, a proportionate allocation was used to select a representative sample and the data collected by use of questionnaires. Data was analysed using descriptive, correlation and linear and multiple regression analyses. The findings obtained indicated that employee engagement had a positive and significant influence on commitment in Kakamega county government. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that vigour engagement has a higher positive and significant influence on employee commitment, with absorption giving the least influence on the predicted variable. The study recommend that county governments should endeavor to enhance engagements among their employees in order to ensure sustained commitment to the organization.

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1. Introduction

Research on employee commitment has attracted significant attention with the focus on its relationship with a number of Human Resource Management practices, such as employee reward (Eshiteti, Mukanzi, & Senaji, 2018; Duncan, Principal & Reilly, 2013; Nujjo & Meyer, 2012), diversity management (Eshiteti, 2019; Kundu, Mehra & Mor, 2017; Kyambi, 2015; Ashikali & Groenveld, 2013; Madera, 2013), recruitment and selection (Islam, Habib & Pathan, 2010), employee learning and training (Odhong', Were & Omolo, 2014), among many other practices. However, despite its importance to the organization, literature about the relationship between employee commitment and engagement seems inadequate. Yet on its own, employee commitment has been researched extensively with some of the HRM practices and strategies, which has led to the increased call and proposal for its improvement in organizations (Eshiteti, 2020; Mukanzi *et al.*, 2014; Wekesa, Namusonge & Iravo, 2013; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Such proposals have sited employee engagement as a hot concept in the management of organizations and workplaces (Makhanu, Mukanzi & Eshiteti, 2018; Rich, Lupine & Crawford, 2010). This concept has become such a significant factor in the measurement and evaluation of employee performance (Makhanu *et al.*, 2018; Anitha 2014; Rich *et al.*, 2010) and hence, such a top business priority for many organizations today (Harvard Business School, 2014; Whittington, & Galpin, 2010). Therefore, employee engagement has been defined as a positive, work-related state of mind which is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Maricutoiu, Sulea & Iancu, 2017; Schaufeli 2013; Admasachew & Dawson, 2010; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2008). On the other hand, employee commitment is a mental or

psychological bond that exist between the employee and the organization, held by a strength that is contingent on a given degree of the employee's involvement, loyalty and the belief in the organization's value (Eshiteti, 2019; Meyer, Stanley & Parfyonayo, 2012). Further, its described as a three construct model of affective, continuance and normative commitments (Meyer *et al.*, 2012; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Simply said, commitment is the individual's identification with and involvement in the firm, while engagement can be seen in the prism of a situation in which people get committed to their work and organization and get so motivated in order to achieve high levels of performance. Thus, to achieve such levels, commitment to the organization is very necessary.

The Gallup report (2016) opined that the world seems to experience very high proportion of employee engagement crisis. Accordingly, only 13% of the global workforce was reported as being engaged by then. Furthermore, only 30% of the global workforce has been estimated to be partially engaged (Chalofsky, 2010; Saks, 2006). Accordingly, only 32% of workers in U.S.A are said to be engaged which leaves a massive 68% disengaged. Another report by Gallup (2013) revealed that of the many employees in USA only 30% are actively engaged, 50% are neutral and 20% are actively disengaged. Shuck, Rocco, Carlos and Albornoz (2011) opined that a huge number of employees within the civil service across the globe, are deeply disengaged. In Europe, employee engagement is of great concern for the public, private and voluntary division of organizations (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). For instance, in New Zealand, the insurance sector organizations tend to practice employee engagement to some extent due to its ability to enhance performance among the workforce (Xu, & Cooper 2011). On the other hand, leadership factors within the insurance sector, were

established as very strong predictors for employee engagement. Similarly, mental ability as well as psychological empowerment were equally found to be strong predictors for work engagement (Makhanu *et al.*, 2018; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016; Ugwu, Onyishi, & Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2014). In the Energy sector in Malaysia, employee engagement is seen in four crucial pillars (Ugwu *et al.*, 2014). These pillars are namely; information communication and technology pillar, job ownership and control pillar, the learning and growth pillar and the freedom to be creative and innovative. These divisions align the objectives of the organizations with individual objectives. In Thailand, only 12 per cent of the working population are said to be engaged, while 82 per cent of the workforce are 'actively disengaged' with another 6 per cent totally disengaged (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane & Truss, 2008). Other studies from the Gallup foundation also found similar levels of engagement and disengagement in countries such as China, Australia and Japan (Gullup, 2013). In Kenya, employee engagement is said to be among the top most urgent trends to be addressed by some of the largest firms with a capability gap of 28 per cent (Makhanu *et al.*, 2018; Deloitte, 2014). For instance, although the UAP Insurance company has put measures in place for the engagement of employees at its corporate level, this has not been replicated at its branches country wide (Makhanu *et al.*, 2018; Deloitte, 2014; Kilonzo, Were & Odhiambo, 2018). Hence, the company still undergoes a lot of challenges that come with lack of employee engagement as a strategy for increased commitment to the firm.

2. Statement of the Problem

County governments in Kenya are faced with a number of challenges which include decreased levels of employee commitment (Karanja, 2017; Wanjiku, 2016) increased levels of turnover as many employees seek to join the national government and the private sector employment opportunities (Kilonzo *et al.*, 2018; Wanjiku, 2016). This has led to reduced productivity and poor service delivery within the sector (Gikonyo, 2018; Karanja, 2017; Wanjiku, 2016) and of course poor work performance (Makhanu *et al.*, 2018; Gikonyo, 2018; Orute, Mutua, Musiega & Masinde, 2015). All these have been attributed to the failure by management in county governments to fully, positively and vigorously engage employees (Makhanu *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, a significant scholarship gap does exist between employee engagement and commitment within the civil service in Kenya and particularly at the County government's level. Several studies have been carried out linking employee engagement to other HR outcomes such as Job Performance (Makhanu *et al.*, 2018; Wanjiku, 2018; Maricutoiu *et al.*, 2017; Otieno, Waiganjo & Njeru, 2015; Anitha 2014; Odhong' *et al.*, 2014; Amanda, Alfes, Truss & Soane, 2013; Truss, Amanda, Soane, Alfes & Delbridge, 2013; Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2012; Rich *et al.*, 2010), organizational effectiveness (Kataria, Renu & Garg, 2013; Sundaray, 2011; Welch, 2011) among many other organizational outcomes. However, these researches have failed to adequately address the gap in scholarship between employee engagement and commitment in the county government of Kakamega in Kenya.

3. Main Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the influence of employee engagement on commitment in Kakamega county government in Kenya.

4. Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives.

- 1) To investigate the influence of vigour engagement on commitment in Kakamega county government in Kenya.
- 2) To investigate the influence of dedication engagement on commitment in Kakamega county governments in Kenya.
- 3) To establish the influence of absorption engagement on commitment in Kakamega county government in Kenya.

5. Literature Review

According to Markos and Sridevi's (2010) study about employee engagement as the key to improved performance, employee engagement was seen as a vast construct touching on every part of the HRM. It suggested that the concept is built on a foundation of earlier concepts such as employee commitment, job satisfaction, and organizations citizen behavior. The study established that employee engagement is a very strong predictor of employee performance. It opined that employees who are engaged are also emotionally attached to their firms as well as highly involved in their jobs with a great enthusiasm for the success of their employer, by working beyond the contractual agreement of employment. Datche and Elegwa (2015); Rich *et al.* (2010) indicated that much research has tended to converge around a common conceptualization of employee engagement as one that implies great investments in human capital and work tasks. Furthermore, previous researches have equally revealed that high employee engagement organizations tend to outperform their competitors by more than 20 per cent (Cattermole, Johnson & Roberts, 2013).

Employee commitment can also be seen as a very important facet of the state of being engaged, especially when it gets conceptualised as a positive attachment to the organization and measured in form of the willingness to exert energy that supports the organization, feeling of pride as a member of the organization, and having a personal identification with the given organization. Accordingly, employee engagement and commitment are associated very closely. According to Amanda, Alfes, Truss and Soane, (2013), an employee that is willing to exert extra effort can also be said to be committed to the organization. However, the closest association of commitment to employee engagement is the construct of affective commitment (Cheche, Muathe & Maina, 2017). Affective commitment is the emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organizational by a given employee (Eshiteti, 2019; Mukanzi, Gachunga, Ngungi & Kihoro, 2014; Meyer & Allen, 1991). The second construct of employee commitment is the continuance one. This involves the discernment of the employee about the costs that would accompany one on leaving the organization (Eshiteti, 2019; Meyer *et al.*, 2012; Allen & Meyer, 1991). However, some researches have directly linked the continuance construct to poor performance, more dysfunctional behavior and less organizational citizenship behavior (Meyer *et al.*, 2012). In addition, the construct has also been positively and significantly associated with organizational rewards (Eshiteti, 2019; Eshiteti, Mukanzi, & Senaji, 2017; Nujjo & Meyer 2012). Similarly, normative commitment has been identified as the third construct of employee commitment. By definition, normative commitment entails the feeling of obligation for continued working for the organization by the specified employee because this is the right thing to do (Eshiteti, 2019; Wekesa *et al.*, 2013; Jøhnsson & Jeppesen, 2012; Meyer *et al.*, 2012). According to Mukanzi *et al.*

(2014) normative commitment is developed through conditioning in areas such as employee engagement and other HR practices. Through conditioning, employees are obligated to repay the benefits accrued by getting committed to the firm, and hence strengthen the psychological contract between the employer and employee. The construct has been positively and significantly linked to HR practices such as employee engagement through the social exchange theory (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels & Hall, 2017; Mitchell, Cropanzano, & Quisenberry, 2012).

Furthermore, employee engagement has been described as a positive, pleasing, and work related state of mind which is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption (Maricutoiu *et al.*, 2017; Schaufeli 2013; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2008). The vigour component, tend to suggest that higher levels of vigour engagement tend to increase an individual's readiness to devote effort towards work by not becoming easily fatigued, as they develop the tendency to remain resolute in the face of any difficulty or failure (Makhanu *et al.*, 2018; Chughtai & Buckley, 2008). This indicates employee's increased commitment and hence, increased level of performance on one's job. Accordingly, vigor engagement is the increased energy, mental resilience, and the individual effort that is invested in one's work at the workplace (Maricutoiu *et al.*, 2017; Schaufeli 2013). Thus, the practice of employee engagement in its vigour component is quite imperative in the conceptualization and measurement of the effect of human capital at the workplace (Datche, & Elegwa, 2015; Cattermole, Johnson & Jackson, 2014). Absorption engagement is the experience of being deeply immersed in one's work when the individual finds it difficult to detach himself or herself from what he or she could be working on (Maricutoiu *et al.*, 2017; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, dedication engagement is characterized by a strong sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, purpose and challenge towards the accomplishment of goals (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016) and resembling the involvement of employees. It represents an interactive mode where employees gain inspiration, pride and a sense of meaning by engaging themselves within their work. This interactive mode of engagement, tend to contribute to employees' job satisfaction, commitment and hence, suppresses the intentions to quit.

However, most employees in county governments in Kenya are not fully engaged or are rather disengaged in their employment, despite a direct relationship between engagement and commitment as well as performance (Makhanu *et al.*, 2018; Orute *et al.*, 2015). On the contrary, because of its ability to enhance success in organizations, employee engagement has gained considerable attention from scholars around the globe (Maricutoiu *et al.*, 2017; Ariani, 2013). Accordingly, Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz, (2011) have suggested that employee engagement contributes significantly to performance and effectiveness of any organization. Plaipate (2019) opined that empirical literature has indicated the existence of a direct relationship between fully work engaged employees and their performance. For instance, Sonnentag (2011) observed that engaged employees tend to report less absenteeism, stay longer with the organization, and are usually happier by being proactive, and hence, become more productive. In support, Robertson-Smith and Markwick (2009) did posit that engaged employees are more likely to stay longer, as they increase their performance by more than 20 per cent beyond their colleagues'

performance as they act to defend the business. In addition, such employees invest fully in their work, increasing their own self-efficacy which in turn evokes their support for the organization, as well as their organizational citizenship (Mugo, Wario & Odhiambo, 2014; Ariani, 2013). Furthermore, Albrecht (2012); Sundaray (2011); Welch (2011) all posited that employee engagement has become an issue of great concern for firms due to its recognition as a vital component in enhancing the effectiveness, competitiveness and innovation of any firm. All these can only be gained through a rather dedicated and committed workforce.

6. Conceptual Framework

Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement

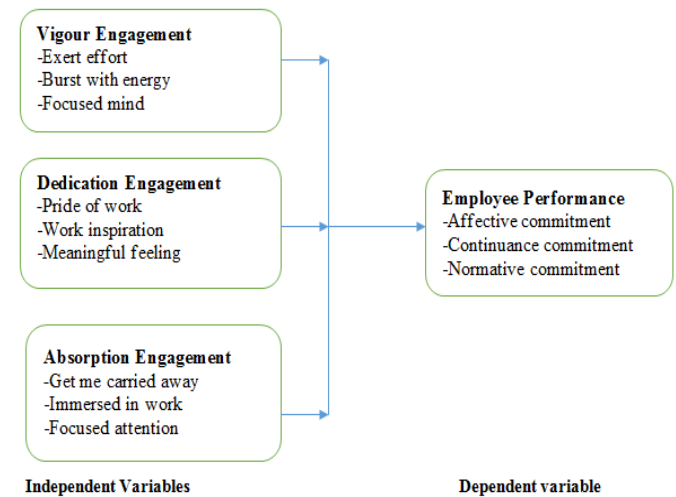


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

7. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design which involved self-administration of questionnaires to 313 respondents selected from a targeted population of 1,693 employees distributed in the 12 sub counties (Kakamega County Service Board's Annual Report, 2016). Four sub counties of Mumias West, Mumias East, Kakamega Central and Kakamega North were simple randomly selected representing 30 per cent of the sub counties. According to Kothari and Garg (2014); Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) 10 per cent to 30 per cent of the population can be used in descriptive studies. Further, Stratified sampling technique, with a proportionate allocation of the sample sizes was used, followed by simple random sampling from each stratum which comprised of the top management, middle level management and the lower cadre employees. Employee engagement was measured in terms of vigour, absorption and dedication constructs, with extensively validated 12 question items adapted from Utrecht Work Engagement scales (UWES-15) as used by Kataria *et al.* (2013); Sundaray (2011). Vigour, which is characterized by one's willingness to invest a lot of effort in work as he or she experiences high levels of positive energy and mental resiliency was measured by statements such as; 'my work makes me feel like bursting with energy.' Furthermore, dedication construct which entails a strong involvement in the individual's work, a feeling of meaningfulness, pride and significance was measured by statements such as; 'my work tends to inspire me'. Finally, the absorption construct which tends to explain the individual employee's state of being fully immersed and concentrated in work, was measured by statements such as; 'my work gets me carried away when doing it.' All the items were measured on

a five point likert scale that ranged from; 1=Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the data obtained was 0.82. Similarly, employee commitment was measured by affective, continuance and normative commitments as adapted from Meyer and Allen (1991) and espoused by many other authors (Eshiteti, 2019; Mukanzi *et al.*, 2014; Meyer *et al.*, 2012). It used a total of 12 questionnaire items for measurement. Descriptive statistics of percentages were used to analyse the data before the bivariate correlation and regression analyses were inferentially conducted to test whether employee engagement through the constructs of vigour, dedication and absorption have a significant influence on employee commitment. A regression model used to investigate this relationship is as shown.

$$Y = \alpha + X_1\beta_1 + X_2\beta_2 + X_3\beta_3 + \mu \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where Y is Employee commitment;
 X₁ is Vigour Engagement; X₂ is Dedication engagement
 X₃ is Absorption engagement; β₁ – β₃ are the regression coefficients
 μ is the error term; α is a constant or the y- intercept

8. Results and Discussion

8.1 Descriptive Statistics

Vigour Engagement

The study sought to determine the extent to which Kakamega county employees are willing to invest their effort in work as they experience high levels of positive energy and mental resiliency. Four questionnaire items for the vigour construct measured by a five point likert scale that range from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree were used. The results obtained were presented in table 1:

The findings in table 1 revealed that a majority (34.0 per cent) of respondents disagreed with the declarative statement that their own work makes exert full effort and energy in carrying out the tasks assigned, while 15.1 per cent of them strongly disagreed with the same statement. However, 24.5 per cent agreed with the same statement with only 6.6 per cent strongly agreeing with it. 19.8 per cent of those surveyed could neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Similarly, results from the same table 1 revealed that a majority of respondents (34.9 per cent) disagreed that their work makes them burst with energy in carrying out their tasks, while another 17.0 per cent strongly disagreeing with the said statement. On the contrary, 20.8 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement, with a paltry 8.5 per cent strongly agreeing with the statement. 18.9 per cent did not agree or disagree with the same statement. In addition, results from the table 1 indicate that a majority of respondents (31.1 per cent) disagreed with the statement that their work has made them mentally resilient, while another 19.8 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. On the other hand, only 14.2 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed, with another 14.2 per cent also agreeing with the same statement.

Substantially, 20.8 per cent of the respondents remained indifferent to any of the responses. Furthermore, a majority of respondents (41.5 per cent) did not agree with the view that they do overtime a lot of times because of the type of work. Equally, an addition 15.1 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. On the contrary, 22.6 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement, with another 10.4 per cent strongly suggesting that they get to do overtime because of the nature of their work. Another 10.4 per cent could not agree or disagree with the statement.

Dedication Engagement

The study also sought to determine the extent to which Kakamega county employees strongly get involved in each individual’s work, feel proud with a sense of meaning, and importance with the kind of work that they do. Similarly, four question items of the dedication construct were measured by a five point likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The results obtained were presented in table 2:

The findings in table 2 indicated that a majority (36.8 per cent) of respondents disagreed with the statement that they feel very enthusiastic about their own work as they carry out the given tasks, while another 22.6 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. However, 28.3 per cent agreed with the statement with a paltry 0.9 per cent strongly agreeing with it. Similarly, 19.8 per cent of those surveyed could neither agree nor disagree with the statement. In addition, results from the same table 2 revealed that a majority of respondents (37.7 per cent) also disagreed with the statement that their work makes a lot of meaning to them, with another 19.8 per cent strongly disagreeing with the said statement. On the other hand, only 23.6 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement, with a mere 4.7 per cent strongly agreeing with the said statement. 14.2 per cent of the respondents did not agree or disagree with the same statement. Furthermore, results from table 2 indicate that a majority of respondents (30.2 per cent) disagreed with the statement that their work tends to inspire them a lot, while another 19.8 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. On the contrary, only 24.5 per cent of the respondents agreed, with another mere 5.7 per cent strongly agreeing with the same statement. Substantially, 19.8 per cent of the respondents remained indifferent to any of the responses. Furthermore, findings in table 2 revealed that a majority of respondents (36.8 per cent) did not agree with the view that they feel so proud about the work that they do. Equally, an addition 19.8 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. On the contrary, only 23.6 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement, with another 8.5 per cent in a strong agreement with the view that they actually feel proud with the nature of their work. Another 11.3 per cent could not agree or disagree with the statement.

Table 1. Vigour engagement.

	5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neither Agree nor disagree, 2= Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree	SD %	D %	N %	A%	SA%
1	My work makes me exert full effort and energy	15.1	34.0	19.8	24.5	6.6
2	My work makes me burst with energy	17.0	34.9	18.9	20.8	8.5
3	My work has made me to become mentally resilient	19.8	31.1	20.8	14.2	14.2
4	My work makes me to do overtime a lot of times	15.1	41.5	10.4	22.6	10.4

Table 2. Dedication Engagement.

	5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neither Agree nor disagree, 2= Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree	SD%	D %	N %	A%	SA%
1	My work makes me feel enthusiastic about it	22.6	36.8	11.3	28.3	0.9
2	My work makes a lot of meaning to me	19.8	37.7	14.2	23.6	4.7
3	My work tends to inspire me	19.8	30.2	19.8	24.5	5.7
4	My work makes me proud of it	19.8	36.8	11.3	23.6	8.5

Table 3. Absorption Engagement.

	5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neither Agree nor disagree, 2= Agree, 1=Strongly Disagree	SD%	D%	N%	A%	SA%
1	My work makes me get very absorbed in it	19.8	31.1	13.2	27.4	8.5
2	My work makes me to get immersed in it.	18.9	33.1	9.4	31.0	7.6
3	My work makes me carried away	23.6	37.7	7.5	20.8	10.4
4	My work always require a lot of my concentration	21.7	27.4	12.3	31.1	7.5

Absorption Engagement

Finally, the study also sought to determine the extent to which individual employees tend to feel that they are being fully immersed, concentrated or absorbed in their own work at the county government of Kakamega. Furthermore, the four question items of the absorption construct were measured by a five point likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The results obtained were presented in table 3:

Findings presented in table 3 indicate that a majority (31.1 per cent) of respondents disagreed with the view that they get so absorbed in their work as they carry out the tasks assigned, while 19.8 per cent of them strongly disagreed with the same statement. However, 27.4 per cent agreed with the statement with only 8.5 per cent strongly agreeing with it. 13.2 per cent of those surveyed could neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Similarly, results from table 3 show that a majority of respondents (33.1 per cent) disagreed that their work makes them get so immersed in it, while another 18.9 per cent strongly disagreeing with the said statement. On the contrary, 31.0 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement, with only 7.6 per cent strongly agreeing with the same statement. On the other hand, 9.4 per cent did not agree or disagree with the said statement. In addition, results from table 3 also indicate that a majority of respondents (37.7 per cent) disagreed that they get so carried away with their work, while another 23.6 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. On the other hand, only 20.8 per cent of the respondents agreed, with another 10.4 per cent also strongly agreeing with the same statement. Equally, 7.5 per cent of the respondents remained indifferent to any of the responses. However, the findings in table 3 show that a majority of respondents (31.1 per cent) were of the view that their work requires a lot of their concentration, with another 7.5 per cent suggesting strongly that this was a true fact. Cumulatively though, a majority of respondents (D =27.4 per cent; SD =21.7 per cent) did not agree with the statement. Similarly, another 12.3 per cent could not agree or disagree with the statement.

Employee Commitment

The study went further to determine the extent to which employees working for the county government of Kakamega are committed to their work and how such commitment is

influenced by their own engagement. Employee commitment measures used a 5- point likert scale as from 1= strongly disagree (SD) to 5=strongly agree (SA). The results obtained were as shown in table 4:

From the findings obtained in table 4 it can be revealed that a majority (38.0 per cent) of respondents agreed that their work makes them want to spend the rest of their careers working for the county government of Kakamega, while 23.4 per cent of the respondents were strongly in the affirmative to with the same statement. On the other hand, 10.5 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the statement, with another 4.5 per cent strongly disagreeing with it. A further 23.6 per cent of the respondents did not agree or disagree with the statement. Consistent with the first responses, majority of respondents (40.0 per cent) agreed that their work makes them feel emotionally attached to their organization while another 30.1 per cent strongly felt that indeed their work makes them emotionally attached to their work place. This was against 10.2 per cent who disagreed and a further 3.2 per cent who strongly felt that their work does not make them feel emotionally attached to the county of Kakamega as their employer. In addition, 16.5 per cent of respondents did not agree or disagree with the statement. Furthermore, table 4 results also revealed that a majority of respondents (35.1 per cent) agreed that their work means a great deal to them. Also, 31.1 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement while 4.1 per cent strongly disagreed with it. 11.0 per cent disagreed of respondents simply felt indifferent to the statement opting to remain neutral to either of the statement. Finally, the findings in table 4 also indicated that a majority of respondents (41.4 per cent) agreed that their work makes them feel like part of the family within the organization. A further 31.6 per cent the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. On the contrary, 5.3 per cent of the respondents were strongly opposed to the statement, while another 13.2 per cent simply disagreed with it. Another 8.5 per cent could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement.

Furthermore, table 4 showed that a majority of the respondents (32.7 per cent) agreed that their work makes it hard for them to leave their employer, while a further 10.2 per cent strongly agreed with the same statement. On the other hand, 21.7 per cent disagreed, while another 16.1 per cent

Table 4. Employee Commitment.

Employee commitment Practices	SD%	D %	N%	A %	SA %
My work makes me want to spend the rest of my career here	4.5	10.5	23.6	38.0	23.4
My work makes me feel emotionally attached to my firm	3.2	10.2	16.5	40.0	30.1
My work means a great deal for me	4.1	11.0	18.7	35.1	31.1
My work makes me feel like part of the family in the firm	5.3	13.2	8.5	41.4	31.6
My work makes it hard for me to leave my employer even if I wanted to	16.1	21.7	19.3	32.7	10.2
My work gives me the benefits that make me continue working for the organization	9.1	7.1	18.1	31.9	33.9
My work makes it a necessity to continue staying with my organization	8.7	22.0	20.9	31.1	17.3
My work gives me few options to leave the organization	11.0	34.3	20.5	18.9	15.4
My work creates a sense of moral obligation to the firm	9.4	19.7	20.9	30.3	19.7
My work needs my loyalty to my organization	7.5	6.3	15.0	48.4	22.8
My work would make me feel guilty if I were to leave the firm	24.8	20.5	20.9	25.6	8.3
My work has made me put in so much that I cannot leave the organization	20.9	21.3	18.9	29.9	9.1

strongly disagreed. 19.3 per cent could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement. Similarly, results from table 4 also indicated that a majority of respondents (33.9 per cent) strongly agreed that they continue to work for their own employer because of the benefits that accrue to their work. A further 31.9 per cent of respondents also agreed with the same statement. On the contrary, only 9.1 per cent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the said statement and another small percentage of 7.1% also disagreeing. 18.1 per cent of those surveyed did not agree or disagree with the statement. Equally, the findings in table 4 also revealed that a majority of the respondents (31.1 per cent) agreed that their work makes it necessary for them to continue working for the same employer. Another 17.3 per cent strongly agreed with the statement. Inconsistently, 22.0 per cent of those surveyed disagreed with it, with a further 8.7 per cent strongly disagreeing. 20.9 per cent, neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Similarly, the results in table 4 also indicated that (34.3 per cent) a majority of the respondent disagreed that their kind of work, gives them very few options to leave their employer. A further 11.0 per cent of them strongly disagreed. On the hand, 18.9 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement with a further 15.4 per cent strongly agreeing with it. Equally, 20.5 per cent of the respondent remained indifferent to the statement as given.

In addition, the findings in table 4 indicated that a majority of the respondents (30.3 per cent) agreed that they work for their employer as an obligation with another 19.7 per cent strongly suggesting that this was a true fact. On the contrary, only 9.4 per cent of those surveyed strongly disagreed. 19.7 per cent, simply disagreed. 20.9 per cent did not agree nor disagree with the statement said. Furthermore, a majority of respondents (48.4 per cent) in this study also agreed that their kind of work require their loyalty to the employer, while a further 22.8 per cent of those surveyed strongly agreeing with the statement. However, only 7.5 per cent of the respondents strongly disagreed, with another 6.3 per cent simply disagreeing. 15.0 per cent of the respondents remained indifferent to the statement. Similarly, the results in table 4 indicate that an accumulated majority of the respondents (SD=24.8 % and D=20.5%) were in disagreement with the statement showing that their work would make them feel guilty if they were to leave.

On the contrary, an accumulated minority (SA=8.3%, A=25.6%) were in agreement with the same statement. 20.9 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Consistently, the findings in table 4 suggests that a majority of the respondent (SD=20.9%, D=21.3%) disagreed with the statement that they cannot leave because of the effort they have put in their work at the current employer. On the other hand, 29.9 per cent of those surveyed agreed with the statement and a further, 9.1 per cent strongly agreeing with it. Similarly, 18.9 per cent could not agree or disagree with the same statement.

8.2 Inferential Analysis

To test for the influence of employee engagement on employee commitment, a correlation and linear and multiple regression analyses were conducted. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in table 5 and interpreted thereof.

The results in table 5 revealed that the vigour construct of employee engagement has a positive and significant influence on employee commitment ($r=0.821^{**}$, $p < 0.01$), while the dedication construct equally has a positive and significant influence on employee commitment ($r=0.757^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, the absorption construct was also found to have a positive and significant influence on employee commitment ($r=0.460^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). These results were in support of other findings from previous researches. For instance, in a study to determine the relationship between the components of work engagement and organizational commitment of female employees in the university (Eghlidi & Karimi, 2016) it was revealed that all the components of work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) were positively and significantly correlated with organizational commitment. Further, the study suggested that dedication engagement had a higher influence on organizational commitment than that of vigour and absorption. Cheche *et al.* (2017) sought to investigate the mediating influence of organizational commitment on the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and that the relationship is partially moderated by organizational commitment.

Table 5. Employee Engagement on Employee Commitment Correlations

		1	2	3	4
1. Vigour	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	313			
2. Dedication	Pearson Correlation	.756**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	313	313		
3. Absorption	Pearson Correlation	.422**	.506**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000		
	N	313	313	313	
4. Employee commitment	Pearson Correlation	.821**	.757**	.460**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.007	
	N	313	313	313	313

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6. Vigour Engagement on Commitment. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.821 ^a	.674	.664	.60733	.674	251.094	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Vigour Engagement

Regressions

It was the hypothesis of this study that employee engagement and its constructs have no significant influence on employee commitment. Therefore, the amount of variation of employee engagement on employee commitment was found by regressing the variables and results obtained presented in tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 respectively.

The results in table 6 revealed the amount of variation on the predicted variable (employee commitment) as explained by the predictor variable (vigour engagement). The regression analysis done yielded the correlation coefficient r value of 0.821 and the r^2 of 0.674, which implies that 67.4 per cent of variance in employee commitment could be explained by vigour engagement. In addition, the adjusted R square (.664) attempted to generate a more honest value which estimates the r square for the entire population at 66.4 per cent. Further, the other variation could be explained by other variables that are not included in the model. Furthermore, the ANOVA statistic gave the F value of (251.094, $p < 0.01$), which was sufficient in support of the goodness of fit for the model which explains the variance in the predicted variable. Similarly, the results in the correlation matrix table 5 revealed that the dedication construct of engagement has a positive and significant influence on employee commitment ($\beta = 0.757$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that employees who experience high levels of dedication engagement may also exhibit high levels of employee commitment. Besides, on conducting the regression analysis between dedication engagement on employee commitment to establish the nature of influence of the predictor variable on employee commitment, the results obtained were presented in table 7:

The findings in table 7 show the amount of change on the dependent variable (employee commitment) as explained by the independent variable (dedication engagement). The regression analysis performed yielded the R value of 0.757 and R^2 of 0.573, which means that 57.3 per cent of the corresponding variation in employee commitment is explained by dedication engagement. In addition, the adjusted R square (.567) attempted to generate a more honest value

which estimate the R square for the population at 56.7 per cent. Furthermore, the ANOVA statistic gave the F value of (87.398, $p < 0.01$) which was large enough in supporting the goodness of fit for the model explaining the variation in employee commitment variable. Hence, this validates the fact that dedication engagement is a useful predictor of employee commitment. Similarly, a regression analysis was also conducted between the absorption engagement and employee commitment. The results obtained were presented in table 8:

The findings obtained in table 8 also show the amount of variance in the predicted variable (employee commitment) as explained by absorption engagement (independent variable). The regression analysis gave the R^2 of 0.212, which implies that 21.2 per cent of the corresponding variation in employee commitment is explained by absorption engagement. In addition, the adjusted R square (.205) also attempted to give a more honest value which estimate the R square for the population at 20.5 per cent. The rest could be explained by other variables not included in the model. Similarly, the ANOVA test gave the F value of (16.565, $p = 0.007$) which was sufficient in the support of goodness of fit of the model explaining the variance in the dependent variable (employee commitment). In addition, a multiple regression was conducted between the predicted variables of (vigour, dedication and absorption) and employee commitment. The results obtained were presented in table 8 and interpreted thereof.

The results obtained in table 8 present the findings on the amount of variation obtained on the composite predicted variable (employee commitment) as explained by predictor variable (employee engagement). The regression analysis yielded the coefficient R value of 0.841 and R^2 of 0.707, which implied that 70.7 per cent of the corresponding variance in employee commitment is explained by employee engagement constructs of vigour, dedication and absorption. In addition, the adjusted R square (.699) also attempted to give a more honest value which estimate the R square for the entire population at 69.9 per cent. The rest could be explained by other variables not included in the multiple regression

**Table 7. Dedication Engagement on Employee Commitment
Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.757 ^a	.573	.567	.87416	.573	87.398	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Dedication Engagement

**Table 8. Absorption Engagement on Employee Commitment
Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.460 ^a	.212	.205	1.08350	.212	16.565	.007

a. Predictors: (Constant), Absorption Engagement

**Table 8a. Employee Engagement on Commitment
Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.841 ^a	.707	.699	.61300	.707	82.183	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Absorption engagement, Vigour engagement, Dedication engagement

**Table 9. Regression Coefficients of Employee Engagement
Coefficients^a**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.189	.348		.513	.609
	Vigour Engagement	.965	.092	.857	10.463	.000
	Dedication Engagement	-.014	.092	-.017	-.200	.842
	Absorption Engagement	-.010	.094	-.009	-.148	.883

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

model. Furthermore, the ANOVA statistic gave the F value of (82.183, $p < 0.01$) which was large enough to support the goodness of fit of the model in explaining the variation in the predicted variable (employee commitment). It also showed that with a p value of less than 0.001, there is less than 1 in 1000 chances that the influence of employee engagement on commitment could be described by a flat line. Thus, this tends to validate the view that employee engagement is a very useful predictor variable for commitment. This supports the findings by Macay, Schneider, Barbera and Young (2010) who established that employee engagement is positively and significantly related to greater returns on investment, assets and shareholder value. Consistently, Markos and Sridevi (2010) found a positive and significant relationship between employee engagement and improved performance through a committed workforce. Similarly, in an empirical analysis of employee engagement on the performance of technical institutions in Kenya (Koech & Cheboi, 2018) established the existence of a positive and significant relationship between the two variables. Further, Kim *et al.* (2012) also found similar results between employee engagement and performance. However, Eghlidi, and Karimi (2016) sought to determine the relationship between the components of work engagement and organizational commitment of female employees in the university. The findings revealed a significant relationship between work engagement components (vigour, dedication and absorption) and organizational commitment. Nonetheless, Cheche *et al.* (2017) found out that employee engagement has a significant influence on organizational performance, with the relationship partially moderated by organizational commitment. The coefficients of the fitted model using the “unstandardized coefficients” was given in the table 9;

Similarly, the findings of table 9 reveal that the unstandardized coefficients β values of the computed scores of employee engagement were 0.965 for vigour, -0.014 for dedication and -0.010 for absorption engagements. Thus, having achieved the set objective, the study rejected the null hypothesis that; H_0 : *Employee engagement has no significant influence on employee commitment in Kakamega County Government in Kenya.*

The model was found to be significant and fit, expressed further as;

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$ and thus, the estimated model was given by;

Employee Commitment (predicted) = 0.189 + 0.965*Vigour Engagement - 0.014*Dedication Engagement - 0.010*Absorption Engagement

9. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study sought to investigate the influence of employee engagement on commitment in the county government of Kakamega in Kenya. The findings indicated that the constructs of employee engagement used; vigour, dedication and absorption, all had a positive and significant influence on employee commitment. Generally, the relationship between employee engagement and commitment was also found to be positive and significant ($r=0.841$, $p<0.01$). Further conclusions drawn suggest that employee engagement should target all employees to ensure increased organization commitment and performance. The study also indicated that the vigour type of engagement registered the highest influence on employee commitment, while the absorption engagement gave the least amount of variance in the predicted variable. Engaged employees, feel more valued and feel obligated to return the gesture through enhanced

commitment to the organization. Therefore, it the recommendation of this study that the county government of Kakamega should institutionalize engagement constructs for increased employee commitment. However, more research with the focus on the long-term effects of employee engagement on other HR out comes such as staff retention and in other sectors is required.

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