

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Continuance commitment and employee performance at University of Eastern Africa, Baraton Kenya**

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The concept of organizational commitment is of utmost importance to the top level management of both public and private institutions. Organizational commitment influences performance of workers and turnover. The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of continuance commitment on employee performance at the university of Eastern Africa, Baraton. The study was guided by Meyer and Allen Theory. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study targeted 233 employees at the University. The researcher stratified the population into teaching and non-teaching staff. To sample the respondents, the researcher used simple random sampling for teaching and non-teaching staff. The researcher used a formular adopted by Nassiuma (2000) to get a sample size of 106 employees. A structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents. The Structured questionnaire consisted of 8 items adapted from Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by Allen and Meyer (1991). These questionnaires were measured on a 5 point Likert scale. Data was presented in frequency distribution tables and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, mean and standard deviation) as well as inferential statistics (simple and multiple regression analysis). The study established that there was a weak negative relationship between continuance commitments and employee performance. This implies that continuance commitment have no significant influence on employee performance at University of Eastern Africa, Baraton. It was recommended the university should put in place clear promotion criteria and improve the employees reward system so as to improve continuance commitment.

**Key words:** Organizational commitment, teaching, non-teaching staff, continuance commitments, employee performance, promotion criteria and reward system.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of organizational commitment has developed over a period of time. The first study on organizational commitment and performance was done by a British Scholar called Howard Becker in 1960 (Cohen, 2007). In his attempt to conceptualize commitment, he put forward a theory called the Side bet. According to Side bet theory the relationship between the

employee and the organization is based on the contract of economic exchange behavior. Becker argued that employees are committed and perform better for the organization they work for because they have hidden investments which he called the side bets. According to Becker the term side bets refer to the accumulation of investments valued by the employee. He further explained with time there is an accumulation of outlays which makes it hard for an employee to move from one organization to the other (Irefin and Mechanic, 2014). The most significant study on organizational commitment was

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undertaken by Meyer and Allen (1991). These two Canadian scholars have played a prominent role in organization commitment development in the 1980s and 1990s. Meyer and Allen came up with the three component model of organizational commitment. According to this model, organizational commitment is conceptualized as having three components; Affective, continuance and normative commitment (Dixit and Bhati, 2012).

Apart from the works of Meyer and Allen (1991) other scholars have also done studies on organizational commitment and performance. For instance in 2006, Clark studied organizational commitment and performance in United Kingdom (UK) based health care units and found that commitment plays a significant role in determining performance outcomes. The researcher discovered that statistically both affective and normative forms of commitment have significant impact on performance. However, he found out that continuance commitment was negatively associated to work performance which implies that the connection between organizational commitment and performance is unclear (Folorunso, Adewale, and Abodunde, 2014). In India, Dixit and Bhati (2012) researched on organizational commitment and its effect on employee performance in Auto component industry. Their research findings revealed that there exists positive relationship between affective, continuance and normative commitments and performance of employees in the industry (Dixit and Bhati, 2012). Studies on organizational commitment and performance have also been done in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Rafiei Amini and Foloondeh (2014) researched on the impact of the organizational commitment dimensions on employee performance. The study looked at 244 employees of co-operative labour and social welfare department of Markazi Province, Iran. Their research showed that affective, continuance and normative had a positive effect on employee performance (Rafiei, et al, 2014).

In Africa, studies on organizational commitment and performance have been done in Nigeria. Folorunso et al, (2014) studied the effects of organizational commitment dimensions on employee performance of Academic Staff of Oyo State owned Tertiary Institutions. They sampled 197 respondents for two tertiary institutions. The results revealed that affective, normative and continuance commitment influence employees' performance among teaching staff of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Folorunso et al, 2014). In East Africa, Henry, Casius and Massele (2013) explored the effect of organizational commitment and job satisfaction on the performance of public secondary schools in Tanzania. They concluded that organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) is positively related to employee performance. Most of these studies were done outside Kenya. It is therefore imperative to undertake a study on

the effects of continuance commitment on employee performance in the Kenya setting.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Organizational commitment is an important determinant of employees' performance among both teaching and non-teaching staff in higher education institutions (Folorunso et al, 2014). Committed employees continue longer, perform better, work more, efficient, effective and complete tasks on time. Thus organizational commitment can improve employees' performance (Khan, Nawaz, and Khan, 2013). In spite of this importance of organizational commitment in improving employee's performance, many Higher Education Institutions in Kenya face the problem of low commitment among its employees. Workers in these institutions exhibit withdrawal behaviors such as lateness, absenteeism, turnover and unsatisfactory delivery of services. This in turn affects service delivery in these institutions. In fact high education institutions in Kenya are not immuned from the problem of low levels of commitment. The dynamism in the higher education institutions is commensurate to the workers performance which to a large extent influenced by commitment. High performance in universities is determined by committed workers with regard to high levels of research and teaching. It is therefore imperative for managers in institutions of higher learning in Kenya to formulate policies to enhance commitment among its staff so as to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Despite numerous studies on organizational commitment and workers performance, the effect of continuance commitments on employees' performance in Higher Education Institutions in Kenya remains unaddressed. Critical reviews of past studies reveal that no study has been undertaken in Kenya in any public or private university on the effects of continuance commitments on employee's performance. It is because of this that the current research investigated the influence of continuance commitments on employee's performance at University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB).

### **Hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between continuance commitment and employee performance at University of Eastern Africa, Baraton.

## **LITERATURES**

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Meyer and Allen Theory.**

This theory was postulated by two Canadians scholars

Meyer and Allen in 1991 (Shurbagi and Zahari, 2013) it is the leading and dominant approach in the study of organizational commitment. This theory of organizational commitment is grounded on earlier studies done by Becker. Contrary to Becker's theory Meyer and Allen noted that the most appropriate approach of measuring side-bet is to precisely evaluate workers views on the amount of side bets (investments) other than measuring attitudinal commitment (Irefin and Mechanic, 2014). In process of testing this argument, Meyer and Allen made comparisons of various associations of the common measures of commitment and the two scales they had formulated. The first scale dwelt on affective commitment and the second scale represented continuance commitment. Meyer and Allen developed a scale to measure affective commitment and were held as a major improvement over the organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ). The Affective commitment scale was explained as an instrument of evaluating dedication categorized by means of positive emotions of identification with, attachment to and involvement in an institution.

Meyer and Allen (1991) as noted in (Shurbagi and Zahari, 2013), postulated that continuance dimensions explains more on Becker's theory. It was planned to verify the degree to which workers consider commitment to their firms by using benefits which they considered are related with quitting. Latter on obligatory commitment was added as the third dimension of organizational commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1991). Obligatory commitment is explained as a sense of duty to precede working in an institution. Workers who are fully committed believe they would remain with the institution (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Socialization is an important factor that affects normative commitment. Normative dedication is explained as sense of responsibility to working in an institution. Workers with excessive level of normative dedication consider they might remain with the institution (Meyer and Allen, 1991) as cited in Irefin and Mechanic (2014). Obligatory dedication is affected to a large extent by socialization. More studies began to examine the tools formulated by Meyer and Allen and to use them as the key tools for measuring commitment. These researches concentrated on investigating the psychological feature of the instruments and their relationships with factors and results (Shurbagi and Zahari, 2013). The three dimensions of commitment were known as "three component conceptualization of organizational commitment". The three constituents were explained as discernable constituents, rather than kinds of attitudinal commitment, that is, workers can experience each of these psychosomatic states to a different level (Meyer and Allen, 1991) as cited in Shurbagi and Zahari, (2013). This study focuses on continuance commitment which is one of the three main components of organizational commitment,

### **Continuance Commitment**

One of the dimensions of organizational commitment according to Meyer and Allen theory is continuance commitment, which is based on the theory of investments (Rafiei et al, 2014). It is explained as commitment related with expenses that workers perceive are associated with abandoning the institution. This type of commitment is grounded on the number of investment (Side-bets) individual make in their current institutions and absence of job opportunities (Dixit and Bhati, 2012). Continuance commitment is grounded on the benefits the worker has made in an institution (Folorunso et al, 2014).

It is the availability of an employee from staff to stay in the organization on account of the venture which incorporate warm association with other employees, benefits, individual funds and obtained work aptitudes which are particular to a specific institution (Nawaz et al, 2013). Consequently the period of time the worker has been in the institution, involvement in communal activities and additional rewards that make it costly for one to quit working for the organization (Adekola, 2012). According to Sharma and Sinha (2015) workers tend to keep working in one institution due to financial and non-financial implications and benefits. Financial implication can be pensions and non-financials implication such as good relationship with fellow employees. Therefore the worker cannot afford to quit the organization because of these costs. The duration which an employee has been working in an organization creates a perception that they would lose the benefits they gained on account of the time spent in the institution and sees that there are job opportunities elsewhere. According to Dixit and Bhati, (2012) when an employee is mindful of the benefits of being in an organization, then the employee is continually committed. In continuance commitment the worker should aware of the actual costs before leaving the organization (Nawaz, et al, 2013).

Ideally, workers with high continuance commitment to the institution will work hard to ensure that the institutions goals and objectives are achieved. They see themselves as an important part of the organization. They became more involved in achieving the organizational missions and visions by improving their job performance (Irefin, and Mechanic, 2014). According to Lew (2012), continuance commitment plays a crucial role in improving the performance of workers. Continuance commitment associated with remaining with or quitting an organization. If a worker realized that the cost of leaving is greater than the advantages of remaining within an organization, then the concerned employee will plan to remain rather than quit the institution. According to Khan et al., (2013), continuance commitment is the main advantage enjoyed from being with the group

Continuance commitment is based on apparent advantages and disadvantages. It calls upon the worker

to consider the merits and demerits of leaving the organization (Khan et al, 2013). Continuance commitment is therefore considered to be calculative. It considers the benefits of remaining and the losses of quitting working in the institution (Ferreira et al, 2011). According to Masood, Nasseem and Khan (2016), employees with high level of continuance commitment will remain in the organization. Individuals with continuance commitment remain with specific organization because of money and other investments they as employee have made as a result of the time spent in the organization, and not because they subscribe with its principles. Again, there is a dual association between institution and employees and this affiliation is continuance commitment (Daneshfard and Ekvaniyan, 2012)

Dixit and Bhat (2012) investigated employee commitment and its impact on sustained productivity in Indian Auto-component industry. They concluded that continuance commitment positively influence productivity. Another research by Daneshfard and Ekvaniyan (2012) showed that there was a positive relationship between job satisfaction and continuance commitment. Altindis (2012) also did research on organizational commitment and job motivation. His research showed that continuance commitment is unrelated to intrinsic motivation. Having reviewed the literature extensively on continuance commitment it was noted that no study has been undertaken in Kenyan academic setting on continuance commitment and employee performance. Therefore the current study sought to fill the knowledge gap by looking into the effect of continuance commitment on employee performance at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In accordance to Creswell (2013), a research design is a framework for amassing and using units of knowledge that is objective in supplying reasonable and proper outcomes with exceptional precision for the purpose of competently and reasonably testing the set hypothesis. The study therefore used descriptive research design. The research was conducted at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya which was established in 1991 and is sponsored by the seventh day Adventist (SDA) church. According to Lavrakas (2011), target population for any study is the entire set of units for which the survey data are to be used to make inferences. The study targeted 233 employees from teaching and no-teaching staff. According to Shah (2011), researchers must calculate the sample size before starting of any study. The researcher used Nassiuma, (2000) sample determination formula to sample 106 employees. To select the individual respondents from each category, the

researcher used simple random sampling method using lottery method. The study utilized questionnaires to collect data from teaching and non-teaching staff. Orodho (2008) noted that questions posed in the questionnaire should be based on the research specific objectives. The researcher coded the data obtained and keyed into SPSS version 20 for the purpose of obtaining frequencies and percentages. The coded information was tabulated and analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics (simple and multiple regressions) were used to accept or reject null hypotheses. The model below was used in the study:

Multiple Regression model

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

Y= Employee performance

$\beta$ = Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2$  and  $\beta_3$ = Coefficients of independent variable

$x_1$ = Affective Commitment

$x_2$ = Continuance Commitment

$x_3$ = Normative commitment

$\epsilon$ =Error term

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Continuance Commitment and Employee Performance

The research sought to find out the influence of Continuance Commitment on Employee Performance. The objective was stated as; to determine the influence of continuance commitment on employee performance among staff in University of Eastern Africa, Baraton. The results as presented in table 1

Among the selected staff, 9 (10%) strongly agreed that they are not fearful of what might occur in the event that they stop their job without an alternative employment, 22 (23%) disagreed. Out of the 94 staff, 6 (6%) agreed that it would be extremely difficult for the staff to quit away from the college supposing they wanted to, 40 (43%) strongly agreed. On the hand 33 (35%) teaching staff strongly disagreed that too much in their life would be disrupted if they decided they wanted to leave the university, 24 (26%) were undecided while 6 (6%) agreed. On whether it wouldn't be too expensive for teaching staff to quit their institution, 32(35%) strongly disagreed, 13 (14%) agreed while 16 (17%) strongly agreed. Table 1 also showed that 4 (4%) strongly disagreed that moving from one institution to another is not a moral thing to do, 21 (22%) agreed while on the other hand 33 (5%) strongly disagreed. Moreover 14 (15%) strongly disagreed that they believe that they have limited options elsewhere to contemplate quitting, 38 (36%) disagreed. It was also

**Table 1** Continuance Commitment and Employee Performance (n=94).

Variables		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
I am not afraid what would I give up my work without having one lined up.	F	22	42	14	7	9	1.2
It is possibly very difficult for me to go away from my institution, even if I preferred to	P	23.4%	44.7%	14.9%	7.4%	9.6%	1.1
	F	22	40	21	6	5	
A lot in my life will be interrupted if I leave my institution now	P	23.4%	42.6%	22.3%	6.4%	5.3%	1.2
	F	20	33	24	6	11	
It might not be too costly for me to quit my organization now	P	21.3%	35.1%	25.5%	6.4%	11.7%	1.4
	F	17	32	16	13	16	
It is immoral to move from institution to another.	P	18.1%	34.0%	17.0%	13.8%	17.0%	1.3
	F	4	33	15	21	20	
I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	P	4.3%	35.1%	16.0%	22.3%	21.3%	1.2
	F	14	36	23	13	8	
I was instructed to trust the importance of devoting oneself to one institution	P	14.9%	38.3%	24.5%	13.8%	8.5%	1.4
	F	13	27	14	14	26	
If I get another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel right to leave my organization	P	13.8%	28.7%	14.9%	14.9%	27.7%	1.1
	F	21	46	12	9	6	
		22.3%	48.9%	12.8%	9.6%	6.4%	
							$\Sigma=9.9$
							$\mu=1.2$
							4

Key: SD-strongly disagreed, D-disagreed, N-neutral, A-agreed, SA- strongly agreed, F-frequency, P-percent,Source: (Researcher, 2016)

**Table 2.** Regression between Continuance and employee commitment.

Independent variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	0.633	0.296		0.035
Continuance Commitment ( $x_2$ )	-0.045	0.050	-0.105	0.372

noted that 27 (28%) staff disagreed that they were instructed to trust the importance of devoting oneself to one institution, 14 (15%) agreed whereas 26 (28%) strongly agreed.

Table 2. also shows that 21 (22%) strongly disagreed that if they get an alternative work opportunity they would still not leave their current station, 46 (49%) disagreed, 12 (13%) were undecided, 9 (10%) agreed while 6 (6%) strongly agreed. From both staff responses it was noted that majority of them strongly disagreed that they were not afraid of what might occur if they leave their present job in the university in the absence of another job. This mean that most of them were afraid of what would happen if they quit their current jobs in the university because they were not certain they will get another job elsewhere. Most of them disagreed that would be extremely difficult for the staff to quit away from the

college supposing they wanted to, which implies that though they were afraid of what will happen if they quit their current job, given a chance they would leave the university for other job opportunities. They also disagreed that a lot in their life would be disrupted if they decided to leave the university, that it wouldn't be too costly for them to leave the university and could leave the university without fearing the impact on their social and financial status. The findings also showed that majority of the staff disagreed that it was a matter of necessity staying with the university, a clear indication that majority of them did desired to stay in the university and could leave when an opportunity arises. Moreover majority of them disagreed that had too few options to consider leaving the university, they disagreed that one of the few serious consequences of leaving the university would be the scarcity of available job opportunities, implying that most

of them were of the view that they would get other alternative jobs elsewhere. Moreover they disagreed that the reason they continue to work in the university was because leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice. It clears that most of them would sacrifice to leave the university

Based on the findings, continuance commitment is not strongly rated; this is because most of the targeted staff disagreed that continuance commitment influence organizational performance. Similarly Clarke (2006) as cited by Folorunso et al., (2014) asserts that there was negative relationship between continuance commitment and performance. This is contrary to Omid and Ahmed (2013) who found out that continuance commitment had Tutei et al., 119

positive and significant relationship with employee's performance. In addition Negin et al., (2013) study showed that organizational continuance commitment had positive and significant relationship with Malik bank employees. Moreover Folorunso et al., (2014) study revealed a favorable association between continuance commitment and workers performance exists in Nigeria's tertiary institutions.

### Simple linear Regression analysis

The study also conducted regression analysis to test the hypotheses of the study. The results are presented in table 2. The regression as shown in table 4.18 showed that the constant ( $\beta_2 = -0.045$ ) showing a weak negative relationship between continuance commitment and employee performance. The associated p-values was ( $p = 0.372$ ) which was greater than ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) therefore the study failed to reject the null hypothesis. This implies that employees at the university do not consider it costly to leave the institution. Most of the workers are willing to leave the institution benefits such as pension notwithstanding. This is in agreement with the findings of research done by Clark (2006) as cited in Folorunso et al, (2014) which revealed that continuance commitment was negatively related to employee performance.

### CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that most of the staff indicated that they were not afraid of what might happen if they quit their current job in the university without having another one lined up. They indicated that given a chance they would leave the University for other Job Opportunities. It was also concluded that the aspect of private life would be disrupted if they leave the university, they also did indicated that a lot in their life would be disrupted if they decided to leave the university, that it wouldn't be too costly for them to leave the university and could leave the

university without fearing the impact on their social and financial status. The findings also showed that majority of the staff disagreed that it was a matter of necessity staying with the university, a clear indication that majority of them did not wish to stay in the university and could leave when an opportunity arises. In addition the study established that continuance commitment is not strongly depicted; this is because most of the targeted teaching and non-teaching staff disagreed on most of the items that were used to measure continuance commitment. Additionally the findings are in agreement with Meyer and Allen theory. There are certain benefits at the university which the employees enjoy. However these benefits are not significant enough to bring high levels of continuance commitment.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The results also showed that there was a weak negative relationship between continuance commitment and employee performance. Therefore to enhance continuance commitment among the staff UEAB should have a well-defined promotion criteria based on merit and seniority. Moreover the university should find ways of improving their reward systems so as to improve the employee's level of continuance commitment.

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