

# Work Engagement and Organizational Commitment among Catholic Religious Men and Women Working In Rural Areas: A Case of Lodwar Diocese in Turkana County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Globally studies have shown work engagement to play a critical role on organizational commitment. However, there are limited studies when it comes to Catholic religious men and women working in rural areas. Due to this gap, the study aimed to examine the relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment among the Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar Diocese, Kenya. The study adopted correlational design. Using census sampling, a sample size of 131 Catholic religious men and women were included in the study. The data was collected using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and Organizational Commitment Scale. Pre-testing of standardized instruments was carried out before the actual data collection to ensure its reliability and validity. The data was analyzed using correlational analysis using SPSS Version 32. The study found a weak negative association between vigour and continuance commitment ( $r=-0.07$ ) and normative commitment ( $r=-0.07$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) in the study. However, energy and affective commitment had a weak positive connection ( $r=0.09$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). A weak positive association was found between dedication and affective commitment ( $r= 0.15$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), continuance commitment ( $r= 0.03$ ), and normative commitment ( $r= 0.008$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), according to the study. Absorption and emotional commitment ( $r=0.04$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and continuance commitment ( $r=0.08$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) had a weak positive connection. Finally, absorption and normative commitment had a weak negative connection ( $r=-0.02$ ;  $p>0.05$ ).

## I. INTRODUCTION

Globally studies have found association between work engagement and organizational commitment (Prerana, 2017; Maleka et al., 2019). The Impact of Employee Engagement on Job Performance and Organizational Commitment in the Egyptian Banking Sector was investigated by Ahmed and Dajani (2015). The survey included 245 banking staff from numerous commercial and governmental institutions in Cairo, Egypt. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data. Regression analysis and Pearson correlation analysis were performed to determine the relationship between the variables under investigation. Employee engagement had a substantial impact on work performance, but had a smaller impact on organizational commitment, according to the findings of the study. Another study by Rameshkumar (2020) used Indian seafaring officers in a survey research on employee engagement as an antecedent of

organizational commitment. The study had a sample size of 440 participants. Data was gathered by utilizing a questionnaire that included demographic information, engagement questions, and organizational commitment questions. Employee engagement was found to be positively linked with the affective and normative components of organizational commitment in this study. The study findings on the association between employee engagement and the continuity component of organizational commitment, on the other hand, found no significant relationship.

Prerana (2017) conducted research in an Indian public sector organization to determine the impact of employee engagement on organizational commitment. A total of 30 workers from a major public sector bank were included in the sample. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Employee engagement (Job Satisfaction and Job Involvement) exhibited a substantial link with organizational commitment, according to the findings of the study. Moreover, Abay and Chia-Chia (2019) conducted a study to establish the relationship between job insecurity and engagement of employees at work. The study was carried out with employees who were working in the private sector in the United States. Dual-frame random digit-dialling sampling was utilized in selecting the participants. To collect data; the study used both questionnaires and an interview guide. The findings revealed that perceived job insecurity reduced work engagement among the employees but was moderated by supervision support. The study was carried out in United States with employees from the private sector while this study was carried out with Catholic religious men and women working in rural areas.

Deirdre et al. (2020) conducted an exploratory study to explore to institutional support on work engagement in child welfare among the Spanish speaking clients. The study was conducted in California, United States among the welfare staffs and clients speaking the Spanish language. The study utilized 10 participants which were chosen through a multi-step sampling process. The study utilized interview guide as a form of data collection. The results suggested that welfare agencies may need to support the clients and workers from Spanish speaking countries by adopting strategies that

promote cultural competence. Also, the study suggested that there is a need to support client-work engagement in order to improve their service delivery. The study was carried in United States with Spanish speaking clients and workers while the current study was carried out with Catholic religious men and women working in Kenyan rural areas. The study used thematic analysis to analyze the data while the current study applied inferential statistics to analyse the data. The current study employed a bigger sample size compared to the previous study.

Manish et al. (2019) looked into the impact of psychological capital on work engagement and the six quality-of-life aspects. The study was conducted in India with 200 personnel, the majority of whom were health care workers. The information was gathered through a survey questionnaire. Employees who scored high on psychological capital had high levels of work engagement, according to the findings of structural analysis. Furthermore, there was no link between work involvement and the six characteristics of life quality. The study had secular employees in India, but the current study involved Catholic religious men and women working in rural areas in Kenya.

Anjali and Satishchandra (2020) investigated organizational and individual factors of work engagement. The research was conducted in Mumbai, India, using full-time employees who had worked for at least one year at a firm. A total of 195 people were chosen for the study using a snowball sampling method. The data was gathered through the use of a questionnaire. The three factors of psychological capital, organizational justice, and organizational climate have a vital role in boosting work engagement, according to regression analysis results. The largest predictor of work engagement was found to be psychological capital, followed by organizational commitment and organizational atmosphere. The previous study looked at the factors that influence job engagement, whereas the current study looks at the relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment. The first survey was conducted among Mumbai employees, while the present study was conducted among Catholic religious men and women working in the Lodwar Diocese of Kenya. Snowball sampling was used to recruit the participants, while census sampling was used in the current study.

Staff perceptions of corporate reputation and employee engagement were investigated in a study by Artyom and Nicola (2017). The research was conducted with 509 South African Bank employees in South Africa. The results of the structural equation model revealed that employee engagement is influenced by business reputation perceptions. Furthermore, psychological contract breach was found to have a detrimental impact on employees' perceptions of their reputation and work engagement. Work engagement was employed as a dependent variable in this study, but it is now being used as a mediator variable between ministry burnout and organizational commitment in the current study. The first study was

conducted with bank employees in South Africa, but the present study was conducted with Catholic religious men and women working in rural areas in Kenya's Lodwar Diocese.

Molefe et al. (2019) conducted an exploratory study in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia to examine employee engagement and commitment in work fulfilment. The survey included 631 employees who were chosen using convenience sampling. There were 212 Namibians, 219 South Africans, and 200 Zimbabweans among the staff. The engagement scale, job satisfaction scale, and organizational commitment scale were used as measurement instruments. The results revealed a significant disparity in employee engagement and organizational commitment between the countries. Though studies have shown relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment, there is lack of similar studies with Catholic religious men and women and especially those working in rural areas. Majority of studies have been conducted globally but there are limited studies in African and particularly in Kenya. Therefore, the current study seeks to fill this gap by examining the relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment among the Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar Diocese Kenya.

## II. METHOD

### *Research Design*

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), research designs are of inquiry in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches which offer specific focus forms for techniques in a research design. The study adopted a correlational design. The design is appropriate when the researcher aims at establishing a relationship between two or more variables. The design was suitable for this study because it aimed at examining the relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment among the Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar Diocese Kenya.

### *Study Area*

This study was conducted in Lodwar Diocese Kenya. A Diocese in the context of Catholic Church is a group of parishes that are governed by a Bishop. Basically, a Diocese is divided into parishes that are each overseen by a priest. Lodwar Diocese is situated in the North-Western area of Kenya, west of Lake Turkana. In 1968 the Diocese was established as prefecture of Lodwar from the diocese of Eldoret. In the year 1978, it was promoted to become Diocese of Lodwar. It has 30 parishes served by Catholic diocesan priests, religious priests, religious brothers and sisters. It is a remote and arid area characterized by poverty and harsh living conditions. The inhabitants are faced with many problems of getting clean water, food, health, education and conflict among communities. There are community conflicts due to the lack of clean water and pressure for herds. The Catholic religious men and women work towards alleviating poverty by promoting peace among the communities, providing clean water, food, education, health services and above all spiritual

nourishment. Due to the harsh conditions, the Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar Diocese is likely to be predisposed to burnout hence the need for this study.

#### *Study Population*

The target population is the total group of individuals from which the sample might be drawn (McLeod, 2019). The target population was 131 Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar diocese (priests, brothers and sisters) (Lodwar Catholic Diocese Office Directory, 2021). Currently there are 36 Catholic priests serving in the diocese in which 27 of them are religious priests and 9 diocesan priests. There are 10 Catholic religious brothers and 85 sisters working in Lodwar diocese. Catholic religious men and women are people called to live a communal life, a life of prayer, professing the three evangelical vows of chastity, obedience and evangelical poverty. They also serve in apostolate in accordance with the different charisms of their founders. Their purpose of existence is rooted in Christ and his call. They have freely chosen to be celibate and see it as fundamental aspect of their commitment to others and God. They are not celibate out of necessity, misfortune, or coercion. Rather they have made an intentional commitment to a particular way of life that involves non-marriage. They profess the vow of poverty which means giving oneself, without reservation, to the cause of the reign of God, even if it means leaving one's family and renouncing the opportunity to marry and have a family. Finally, they profess the vow of obedience which is a commitment to the fundamental Christian principle that at the end of the day, all truth is communal.

#### *Sample Size and Sampling Procedure*

The study employed census sampling. Using census, the study utilized a sample size of 131 which included the whole population under the study. It is a technique utilized by researchers with an intention of collecting data on the entire eligible element within a given population. It was suitable for this study because the population was small and therefore, the whole population was included as part of the sample size (See Table 1).

Table 1: Census Technique

Type of Population	Total Population	Sample Size
Diocesan Priests	9	9
Religious Priests	27	27
Religious Brothers	10	10
Religious Sisters	85	85
Total	131	131

Source: Lodwar Catholic Diocese Office Directory (2021)

#### *Data Collection Methods and Instruments*

The study employed standardized questionnaires to collect data. The questionnaire contained three sections. Section A included data on the demographic details of the participants

which included age, gender, educational level, country, and vocational identity. Section B collected data on work engagement using Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Section C collected data on organizational commitment using Organizational Commitment Scale.

#### *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale*

The modified Utrecht Work Engagement Scale was used to collect data on employee engagement. In the Job-Resources Model, work engagement is closely tied to Job Resources. Schaufeli and Bakker came up with the idea for the instrument (2003). It consists of 17 measures that assess three subscales of job engagement: vigor, devotion, and absorption. Six items make up the vitality dimension, five items make up the dedication dimension, and six items make up the absorption dimension. This study used both composite and subscale scoring methods. Individual scores are calculated by dividing the overall score for both the composite scale and the subscales by the number of items, according to the standards. The composite and three-subscale mean scores range from 1 to 5, with 1-2 being low, 3 being average, and 4-5 being high (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The tool has been found to be quite reliable in numerous studies. According to a study by Rothmann and Jordaan (2006), the reliability coefficients for the UWES were found to be between 0.68 and 0.91, with absorption having a lower alpha value than vigor and devotion. Demerouti (2010) of Rotterdam, Netherlands, reported a reliability coefficient of 0.69 for vigor and 0.71 for dedication in another study. In a research including police officers in South Africa, Naude and Rothmann (2004) achieved an alpha value of 0.61, whereas Storm and Rothmann (2003) reported a reliability coefficient of 0.84. (Vigor: 0.78; Dedication: 0.89 and Absorption: 0.78). Vukani (2017) observed a Cronbach alpha of 0.96 for the scale in a study on work engagements and burnout dimensions in South Africa. The alpha for each of the three subscales was 0.68 for energy, 0.88 for dedications, and 0.90 for absorption. Some items include: "I find the work that I perform full of meaning and purpose," "At my ministry, I feel strong and vigorous," and "I am engrossed in my work," are just a few of the scale's sample items. On a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never (1) to always (5), the participants respond to all of the items. To accommodate the demographic, some of the phrasing in the items was altered. The words "work" and "job" were substituted with the word "ministry".

#### *Organizational Commitment Scale*

The organizational commitment was measured using a modified Organizational Commitment Scale by Allen and Myer (1996). Affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment are the three dimensions of the Likert scale. The instrument consists of 18 elements, 6 of which are used to measure each dimension. Participants use a 5-point Likert scale to respond to all of the items, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The organizational commitment scale has been demonstrated

to have strong internal reliability in previous studies. In a cross-sectional study in Pakistan, Abdullah (2011) evaluated the Allen and Myer organizational commitment scale and found an alpha of .67 for emotional commitment, .53 for continuance commitment, and .67 for normative commitment. Furthermore, Gbadamosi (2006) discovered that organizational commitment has an internal consistency reliability of .73 in African samples. Affective commitment had an alpha value of .74, continuance commitment had an alpha of .74, and normative commitment had an alpha of .66. Some items include: "I would be extremely glad to spend the rest of my vocation life in this diocese or congregation"; "Leaving my diocese or congregation would disturb too much

of my life"; and "I would feel bad if I left this diocese or congregation now". Items 3, 5, 6, and 13 have been reversed, and inverse scoring was used during the analysis. Some elements were changed to meet the study's target population. The words "career" was changed to "life," "organization" to "diocese or congregation," "job" to "minister," and "work" to "service".

### III. RESULTS

The study sought to establish the relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine this relationship and findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between Work Engagement and Organizational Commitment

		Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Vigor	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	131					
Dedication	Pearson Correlation	.67**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
	N	131	131				
Absorption	Pearson Correlation	.62**	.49**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00				
	N	131	131	131			
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.09	.15	.05	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.33	.08	.58			
	N	131	131	131	131		
Continuance Commitment	Pearson Correlation	-.07	.03	.08	-.05	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.40	.73	.39	.61		
	N	131	131	131	131	131	
Normative Commitment	Pearson Correlation	-.07	.01	-.02	.30**	.46**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.43	.92	.86	.01	.00	
	N	131	131	131	131	131	131

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
Field data, 2021

The study found a weak negative association between vigour and continuance ( $r=-0.07$ ) and normative commitment ( $r=-0.07$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) in the study. However, vigor and affective commitment had a weak positive connection ( $r=0.09$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). A weak positive association was found between dedication and affective commitment ( $r=0.15$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), continuance commitment ( $r=0.03$ ), and normative commitment ( $r=0.08$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), according to the study. Absorption and affective commitment ( $r=0.04$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and continuance commitment ( $r=0.07$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) had a weak positive connection. Finally,

absorption and normative commitment had a weak negative connection ( $r=-0.02$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). Work engagement may not influence organizational commitment among Catholic religious men and women working in rural locations, according to the findings.

### IV. DISCUSSION

The study was to examine the relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment among the Catholic religious men and women working Lodwar Diocese.



Results showed there was no significant relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment among the Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar Diocese. The findings were consistent with findings of Ahmed and Dajani (2015) on their study on the impact of Employee Engagement on Job Performance and Organizational Commitment in the Egyptian Banking Sector. A regression analysis and Pearson correlation analysis were performed to determine the relationship between the variables under investigation. Employee engagement had a smaller impact on organizational commitment, according to the findings of the study. The findings of Rameshkumar's (2020) survey study on employee engagement as an antecedent of organizational commitment utilizing Indian seafaring officers validate this study. Employee engagement was found to be positively linked with the affective and normative components of organizational commitment in this study. The study findings on the association between employee engagement and the continuance commitment of organizational commitment, on the other hand, found no significant relationship. Catholic religious men and women are probably committed to their congregation because of their lifestyle whether they score low or high on work engagement. They are called to a life of prayer, living a community life, vowed life and working in ministry. Their lifestyle is not only defined by their ministry and therefore, this may explain why work engagement has little influence on their organizational commitment.

However, the findings contradict those of Ahuja and Gupta (2018), who found organizational commitment and work engagement to be a facilitator for retaining higher education professionals in a cross-sectional descriptive study. The outcomes of Ahuja and Gupta's (2018) investigation demonstrated a high link between organizational commitment and work engagement ( $r = .54, p > .05$ ). Similarly, the findings disagreed with the findings of Prerana (2017) who investigated the impact of employee engagement on organizational commitment in an Indian government agency. Employee engagement (Job Satisfaction and Job Involvement) exhibited a substantial link with organizational commitment, according to the findings of the study. The findings of this study could have differed with earlier studies based on population. Majority of studies on work engagement and organizational commitment have been carried out with employees in secular organizations. There is possibility of employees to engage in work and commit to the organization based on the benefits and privileges received. On the other hand, Catholic religious men and women are likely to show work engagement and organizational commitment based on their calling rather than the benefits and privileges they receive.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The findings showed that there was no significant relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment among the Catholic religious men and women working in

Lodwar Diocese. This could have been influenced by the population of the study and sample size. Majority of studies on work engagement and organizational commitment have been conducted with employees from secular organization and could have differed with the population of this study because of their unique lifestyle. The study recommends the future studies to employ qualitative approach in exploring the phenomenon under study.

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