

# Spirituality 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:** Ministry burnout is a global issue of concern among Church ministers across the world. Studies have shown that majority of Church ministers leave ministry prematurely due to burnout which in turn affects their commitment to the Church. The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment among the Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar Diocese. The study adopted correlational research design. A sample size of 131 Catholic religious men and women were selected using census sampling method. The data was collected using Spirituality Scale and Organizational Commitment Scale. Pre-testing of the standardized instruments was carried out before the actual data collection to ensure its reliability and validity. The data was analyzed for correlational analysis using SPSS Version 32. The results showed weak positive relationship between self-discovery and continuance commitment  $r = 0.009$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and normative commitment ( $r = 0.19$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). On the other hand, there was no significant relationship between self-discovery with continuance commitment ( $r = -0.058$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) and normative commitment ( $r = -0.033$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). Also, there was no significant relationship between Eco-awareness with continuance commitment ( $r = -0.018$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) and normative commitment ( $r = 0.071$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ).

## I. INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is central to the life of Church ministers and especially Catholic religious men and women due to the nature of their calling. Studies have shown that spirituality plays a critical role on organizational commitment among the employees. For instance, Anat, Rivka and Bar (2016) conducted a study to examine of the influence work spirituality in Social Services Department. The research was conducted in Israel with a sample size of 178 social workers from social care institutions. Questionnaires were the most common method of data collection. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between workplace spirituality, work spirit, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, there was no evidence of a link between workplace spirituality, spirit at work, and organizational commitment. Burnout was also linked to role attributes, organizational attributes, affective and continuous organizational engagement, job happiness, and workplace spirituality, according to the findings.

A study by Moghadam and Makvandi (2019) among employees of the Maroon Petrochemical Company in Iran evaluated the association between spiritual capital and job performance with organizational citizenship practices. Standard questionnaires were utilized to gather the information. The sample size was obtained using the cluster sampling approach. According to the study findings, spiritual capital exhibited a substantial association with employee work performance and organizational commitment. The association between religion, spirituality, job happiness, and organizational commitment was explored by Debra et al. (2017). The Spiritual Leadership Scale and the Spirituality at Work Scale were used to assess workplace spirituality. To assess job satisfaction and organizational commitment, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire short-form and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire were utilized. According to the findings, spiritual capital can improve job happiness and organizational dedication.

Djafri and Kamaruzaman (2017) conducted research to see how workplace spirituality affects organizational commitment among the Malaysian Takaful agents. There were 600 people in the sample. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The data was analyzed using Pearson's correlation and stepwise multiple regressions techniques. According to the study, spirituality in the workplace was found to have a good and significant effect on organizational dedication. Every aspect of workplace spirituality and organizational devotion was found to have a considerable, positive, and meaningful relationship. More spiritual training, workshops, lectures, and seminars on spirituality at work should be developed, according to the study, to enable employees of tactful operators and agencies cope better with life challenges, reduce stress, strengthen loyalty, and improve organizational commitment. Moreover, Tamer and Abdelkareem (2020) conducted a study to investigate how the person-organization spirituality fit influences employees' well-being within an organization. The study was carried out among the individuals who were working in health, education and bank sectors in Jordan. Using convenience sampling, 231 participants were selected to participate in the study.

Questionnaires were the major instruments of measure that was utilized with the study. The findings showed that the employees who experience spirituality in the workplace report high levels of psychological well-being.

Furthermore, Maria and Arnaldo (2019) conducted a study to understand the concept of spirituality in the place of work and how it can influence the attitude of workers. The study was carried out in Portugal among the individual workers. Through snowball sampling 273 participants were selected to participate in the study. Questionnaires were used as the means of collecting data. The results showed that spirituality had a significant influence on the welfare of employees and their environment within the organizations.

In Africa, there have been few studies on the impact of spirituality and organizational commitment. Thul, et al. (2017) carried out an exploratory descriptive qualitative study to learn more about the challenges of incorporating spirituality interventions into the workplace. The research was conducted out in South Africa using undergraduate students. Purposive sampling was used to select 38 individuals for the study. The information was gathered through the use of a focus group discussion guide. Hurdles to spirituality in the classroom, barriers to spirituality in fieldwork practice, and barriers to spirituality at the personal level were discovered through thematic analysis. In Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia, Anthony, et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study to evaluate the role of religion and spirituality among persons with disabilities. A total of 103 people were included in the study, and data was obtained utilizing an interview guide. The results of the thematic analysis revealed that people with disabilities value their faith and believe in a Supreme Being in control, especially when faced with life's hardships. Furthermore, the data demonstrated that they attribute their achievement to God's favour rather than their own strength and wisdom. Though studies have shown relationship between and spirituality and organizational commitment, majority of these studies have been conducted with employees in secular organizations but there is scant of studies among Catholic religious men and women who are working in Faith Based Organizations. In addition, most of these studies have been conducted in the Western world and there is lack of evidence of the similar studies in Africa and especially with Catholic religious men women working in Kenyan rural areas. The current study aimed to establish the relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment among the Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar Diocese Kenya.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### *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 research design. The design is appropriate when the researcher aims at establishing a relationship between two or more variables. The design was suitable this study because it aimed at establishing the relationship between spirituality 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 (Van, 1909). 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 (Good, 2007). 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 lack of clean water and pasture 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 (Good, 2007). Due to the harsh conditions, the Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar Diocese is likely to be predisposed to burnout hence affecting their organizational commitment.

### *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). 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 Diocese of Lodwar Office Directory, 2021). 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 (Austin, 1982).

#### *Sample Size and Sampling Procedure*

The study employed census sampling (Paul, 2007). Using census sampling, 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>131</b>

Source: Catholic Diocese of Lodwar 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 quantitative data on spirituality using Spirituality Scale (Colleen, 2003) and section C collected data on organizational commitment using Organizational Commitment Scale (Allen & Myer, 1990).

#### *Spirituality Scale*

Data on spirituality was measured using Spirituality Scale. The instrument was developed by Colleen Delaney in 2003. It has 23 items measuring three dimensions of spirituality namely self-discovery (4 items), relationships (6 items) and Eco-Awareness (13 items). The participants respond to the items in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). High scores indicate high levels of spirituality. Some sample of the items include: "I find meaning in my life experiences", "I meditate to gain access to my inner spirit", "I use silence to get in touch with myself". The lowest score to be obtained in the scale is

23 while the highest is 115. The scores between 23-39 indicates very low level of spirituality, 40-69 indicates low spirituality, 70-94 moderate spirituality and 95-115 indicate high levels of spirituality. The scale has reported internal reliability of .94. The internal reliability of the three subscales ranged from .81 to .94. The test-retest reliability of the scale was repeated within two weeks with a group of volunteers. Pearson's coefficient showed test-retest reliability of .84 showing that there was stability on the scale over a short period of time.

#### *Organizational Commitment Scale*

The organizational commitment was measured using a modified Organizational Commitment Scale. Allen and Myer designed the instrument in 1990. 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. The participant uses a 5-point Likert scale to respond to all of the items, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The organizational commitment measure has been demonstrated to have strong internal reliability in previous studies. For instance, in a cross-sectional study in Pakistan, Abdullah (2011) evaluated the Allen and Myer Organizational Commitment Scale and found an alpha of 0.67 for emotional commitment, 0.53 for continuance commitment, and 0.67 for normative commitment. Furthermore, Gbadamosi (2006) discovered that Organizational Commitment Scale has an internal consistency reliability of .73 in African samples. Affective commitment had an alpha 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 find out whether there was a relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment. Pearson correlation analysis was used to find this relationship and findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between Spirituality and Organizational Commitment

		Self Discovery	Relationships	Eco-Awareness	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Self Discovery	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	131					
Relationships	Pearson Correlation	.643**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
	N	131	131				
Eco-Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.646**	.789**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
	N	131	131	131			
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.104	.166	.117	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.239	.058	.183			
	N	131	131	131	131		
Continuance Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.009	-.058	-.018	-.045	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.918	.508	.841	.613		
	N	131	131	131	131	131	
Normative Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.019	-.033	.071	.298**	.463**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.833	.710	.421	.001	.000	
	N	131	131	131	131	131	131

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

Field data, 2021

The study reported weak positive relationship between self-discovery and continuance commitment ( $r=0.009$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and normative commitment ( $r=0.19$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). On the other hand, there was no significant relationship between self-discovery with continuance commitment ( $r=-0.058$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) and normative commitment ( $r=-0.033$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). Also, there was no significant relationship between Eco-awareness with continuance commitment ( $r=-0.018$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) and normative commitment ( $r=0.071$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). This implies that Catholic religious men and women are committed to the Catholic Church whether they manifest high or low levels of spirituality.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The study was to establish the relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment among the Catholic religious men and women working in Lodwar Diocese. Overall results showed that there was no significant relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment among Catholic religious men and women. The results of this study contradicted the findings of the other

studies examined. For example, in their study of the relationship between spiritual capital and job performance with organizational citizenship behaviours among employees of the Maroon Petrochemical Company, Iran, Moghadam and Makvandi (2019) discovered that spiritual capital had a significant relationship with employee job performance and organizational commitment. The results could have differed as a result of population. By fact that Catholic religious men and women are called to religious way of life, whether they score high or low spirituality, it may not influence their commitment to their congregations. Unlike the employees who may be committed in the organization to earn living, the Catholic religious men and women have devoted their lives to the Church for the service of humanity.

Moreover, the findings of Debra et al. (2017) disagreed with the conclusions of this study in their investigation on the association between religion, spirituality, job happiness, and organizational commitment. Spiritual capital, according to their research, can boost job happiness and organizational commitment. Furthermore, Djafri and Kamaruzaman (2017) found contradictory results in their

study on the impact of workplace spirituality on organizational commitment. The study discovered a considerable, positive, and significant association between each component of workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. Through continuance commitment, employees may remain in the organization based on the benefits and privileges they gain when inside compared to when they are outside. On the other hand, the Catholic religious men and women may remain committed to their congregation because of their calling to religious life other than receiving benefits and privileges. Some of the Catholic religious men and women have many opportunities because of their level of education and exposure which can lead them to quit their congregation but they remain committed because it is style of life they have chosen other than a career.

Also, despite their level of spirituality, the Catholic religious men and women are expected to make a commitment to the Church. They demonstrate normative commitment by giving back to the congregation based on how much resources the congregation has invested in them. For instance, since the initial formation, the congregation has taken the responsibility of taking care of all the needs of the members including, physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual among others. A member may feel that the congregation has invested a lot on them and leaving the congregation would be morally wrong. During perpetual profession, members of the congregation profess their vows in public promising to the leadership of the Church and Christians as witness that they going to consecrate their entire life in the Church for the service of humanity. Therefore, whether Catholic religious men and women and women score high or low in spirituality they are likely to commit themselves to the Church.

In addition, a study by Pradhan, Pradhan, and Jena (2016) looked at the impact of workplace spirituality on affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction among 480 workers working in various Information Technology Firms across India. Employees' emotional organizational commitment and job satisfaction were positively influenced by workplace spirituality, according to the study's findings. Finally, the conclusions of a study by Anat, Rivka, and Bar (2016) on the impact of work spirituality in the social services department differed from those of this study. The findings of Anat, Rivka, and Bar's (2016) study revealed a high positive association between workplace spirituality, spirit in the workplace, and job satisfaction. However, it partially agreed with this study in that there was a substantial association between workplace spirituality, spirit in the workplace, and organizational commitment.

## V. CONCLUSION

Previous studies on spirituality and organizational commitment contradicted the findings of the current study. The nature of the results could have influenced by the population of the study. Majority of studies have been conducted with employees in secular organizations while the

current study was carried out with Catholic religious men and working in faith based organizations. The sample size could have influenced the findings of the study. The study recommends the future study to replicate the study with big sample size to confirm the findings.

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