

Working Conditions and Employee Commitment in Nyandarua County Government, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The establishment of county governments was coupled with the expectation that the employee efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery would be irreproachable. However negative outcome is witnessed due to poor performance and high turnover portraying a bad image of the commitment of the employees at the work place. The study sought to establish the influence of working conditions on employee commitment in Nyandarua County Government, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population targeted was 1598 employees at county headquarters and using statistical formulae a sample of 94 respondents was obtained. The study utilized a closed ended structured questionnaire for data collection. The instrument was first piloted and tested for validity and reliability prior to data collection. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. Data was analyzed in both descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tables. The study established that working conditions had positive significant relationship with employee commitment. Regression analysis demonstrated that working conditions was a significant predictor of employee commitment. The study recommended that working conditions should be enhanced to improve employee commitment.

Key Words: Working Conditions, Employee Commitment, Nyandarua County Government

INTRODUCTION

One of the best valued assets in any organization is employees who are committed. In today's competitive world, there is no organization that effectively executes its activities without commitment of each employee to the goals and objectives of the organization. Employees need to illustrate relevance and act like entrepreneurs while working whilst performing their duties and responsibilities as effective team members. Employees would also desire to be associated with a firm that is successful, offers better remunerations, provided with job security and offers development opportunities (Zhenjing 2022). Organizations value commitment among their employees because it reduces withdrawal behavior such as; turnover, go slows, lateness and absenteeism. The level of performance of an individual employee is enhanced by commitment of the employee which is a necessity to develop organizational performance. A committed employee in the workplace is of great importance to the organization as they require minimal or no supervision to carry out and achieve the responsibilities given to them (Okongo 2024).

The greatest asset an organization can have is employees who are committed as they have a vital role in profitability and efficiency of the organization at large. Active employee participation, cost and efficiency improvements and continuous flow of improvements are some of the organizational benefits that occur due to employee commitment levels. Those committed employees are said to improve an organization because they are satisfied thus enjoying doing their jobs, feel part of a team, feel secure in their jobs and are well trained (Ranta & Ylinen 2023). Commitment of employees has significance allusion for recruitment. Through investigating main drivers of commitment employees, companies have a catalogue of characteristics to help them when hiring and forming a workforce that is committed instead of the company incurring huge moneys in forming their

workforce and training each year but only to find employees who are productive and talented apply for other jobs as they have the potential to join in the competition (Ndai & Makhamara 2021).

According to Amis & Janz (2020) some of the benefits acquired from committed employees include; decreased absenteeism, decreased intention to search for alternative, decreased intention to leave, decreased employee turnover, increased sales, increased total return, increased performance and increased job satisfaction. Committed employees who are highly motivated, contribute their time and energy to the pursuit of organizational goals, and are increasingly acknowledged to be the primary asset available to an organization. Furthermore, committed employees are more suitable to generate the social capital that facilitates organizational learning (Ndai & Makhamara 2021). Changes are taking place drastically in today's competitive world, so preparing and retaining committed employees is imperative. To gain competitive advantage, organizations need improved productivity at all levels which requires commitment on the part of all employees.

Organizations that demonstrate commitment to employees will attract and retain the desired workforce and will win the battle for the workforce share (Zhenjing 2022). Committed employees are more productive and work with focus on qualitative and quantitative input to increase customer satisfaction and profit maximisation in the organization. Increased employee commitment also leads to improved performance. Committed employees associate with organizational membership, believe in the objectives and organizational values, and therefore display higher levels of performance and productivity. In many organizations there is a growing gap between the expectations of employers and what they are prepared to do. To succeed in the face of increasing competition, organizations need improved productivity at all levels. This requires commitment on the part of all employees which can only be achieved through better management practices (Naveed 2022).

Since the promulgation of the constitution of Kenya 2010, a number of people left other sectors of the economy including renowned organizations and joined County Government workforce (Modise, 2023). This was as a result of perceived attractive compensation and better terms of engagement, coupled by high level of optimism. It was expected that the quality of services, effectiveness and efficiency by employees would be irreproachable. This is not the case as quite a number of studies have pointed out the poor performance of employees in various County Governments (Mwaniki & Omuya 2024). This paints a grim picture as far as employee organizational commitment is concerned. Various reasons have been cited for this state of affairs. Some of the reasons cited include subjective performance appraisal, poor working conditions, subjective leadership method, poor employee management, inadequate training, untimely compensation and political factors. Other reasons include reports of intimidation, threats, suspension and dismissal of county employees by some Governors. In some extreme cases there were reports of physical attacks or evictions of employees from offices ostensibly on perception of failure to support Governor Political Bids. Available information is scanty as to how these factors affect employee organizational commitment. Among the studies in this area, Estigoy and Sulasula (2020) examined the factors affecting employee commitment in the work place in Philippines. Ayubu & Mose (2022) assessed the determinants of employee turnover in Nairobi Hospitals. Mwangi & Makokha (2021) examined the determinants of employee commitment on organizational performance in Kiambaa sub-county in Kenya. However, none of these studies have examined employee commitment in county governments in Kenya. Furthermore, while previous studies have identified various determinants of employee commitment including working conditions, performance appraisal, subjective leadership, employee training, poor human resource management and compensation among others, none has solely focused on working conditions as a precursor to enhanced employee commitment. The current study assessed the effect of working conditions on employee commitment in Nyandarua County Government, Kenya.

Objective of the study

The objective was to assess effect of working conditions on employee commitment in Nyandarua County Government, Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

A good working condition involves the physical geographical location as well as the immediate surroundings of

the work place. Typically, it involves other factors relating to the place of employment, such as the quality of communication flows, secure environment, manageable work load and other additional perks and benefit of employment. Studies have found that employees require appropriate job resources to perform job tasks effectively under conducive conditions for heightened employee commitment (Amis & Janz 2020). If a worker is not carried along in terms of good working environment and given all the necessary assurances and incentives to convince him that the days of militarizing the work is over, he will continue to live in fear and unsatisfied. The fear according to him will cause lack of commitment and job satisfaction. If employees are not deprived of what they are supposed to get from their work environment, it prevents them from feeling dissatisfied, possible protest or complains. In a usual work environment, significant factors include physical and behavioural elements associated with employees' abilities and in consequence affect their behaviour in terms of productivity. As a result, a good workplace plays a crucial role in influencing the level of employee engagement, productivity, and performance (Zhenjing 2022). Often times work environments are poorly designed workstations, unsuitable furniture, lack of ventilation, inappropriate lighting, excessive noise, insufficient safety measures in fire emergencies and lack of protective equipment. People working in such environment are prone to occupational disease and hazards which would impact their performance.

Unsafe working conditions are created by unsuitable settings, which also reduce employee productivity (Hamidi 2020). More attention should be paid to identifying and dealing with working conditions because when employees have negative perception to their environment they sometimes suffer from chronic stress, absenteeism, and their productivity and commitment tend to be low. On the other hand, an organization with a friendly, trusting, and safe environment experiences greater productivity, communication, creativity, and financial health. Elements of working environment which includes office layout plan and also the office comfort need to be proper so that the employees would not be stressed while getting their job done. Building design, age, workplace layout, cleanliness, ventilation, equipment design, space, temperature, vibration, lighting systems, noise, radiation, and air quality are just a few of the significant physical factors in the workplace (Kodarlikar & Umale 2020). Good working conditions motivate employees in terms of safety and comfort. Employees exposed to a good working condition are likely to be more productive and highly motivated. Where the workers are provided with amenities such as health services, the living standards as well as improved productivity result to reduced absenteeism and labour turnover.

Creating better and higher performing workplace requires an awareness of how workplace impacts behaviour and how behaviour itself drives workplace performance (Sundstrup 2020). The workplace environment impacts employee morale, productivity and engagement both positively and negatively. Comfortable office design motivates the employees and increases their performance to a large extent. If the employees have negative perception of their working conditions, they are likely to be absent, have stress related illness, and their productivity and commitment tend to be low. On the other hand, organizations that has a friendly, trusting, and safe environment, experience greater productivity, communication, creativity, and financial health. There are factors such as conducive working environment free from danger, communication flow, manageable work load when combined with other factors provide a more powerful determinant of employee's commitment. However, when these factors are missing, employees come to work only for a check and is present at work in body only leaving their mind outside the gate. Matters related to ergonomics at the workplace include the human body's responses to physiological and physical stress (Festervoll 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive research design since the design focuses on studying a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationships between variables. the target population of the study was 1598 employees of Nyandarua County Government. Using Nassiuma's statistical formulae, a sample size of 94 respondents was obtained. Simple random sampling technique was then employed in targeting the respondents across the various county departments. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The instrument was piloted to ensure it was reliable and valid. Diagnostic test including linearity, normality, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity were undertaken. Data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences and the results presented in tables.

Validity of the Instrument

The research instruments were tested for validity to ascertain whether they measure the variables under study. As such, the content validity was ascertained by engaging the research supervisor to check and assess the frequency of errors and the accuracy of data expected. Further the study considered literature reviewed in coming up with the questionnaire in addition to consulting with various professionals in the campus in seeking guidance in the development of the questionnaire. The process of validation enabled the researcher to test the suitability of the questions, the adequacy of the instructions provided, the appropriateness of the format and sequence of questions. Some corrections were made to the questionnaires and the final version was printed out.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the results obtained from a research study (William 2024). Research is considered reliable when it produces consistent results under the same conditions and over time. (Olayinka & Abideen 2023) identify various types of reliability tests, including alternate forms, inter-rater, and internal consistency, commonly used in management sciences. The reliability of the research questionnaire for this study was determined through Cronbach alpha coefficient. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. However, there is actually no lower limit to the coefficient. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. Values above .7 were assumed to indicate that the instrument is reliable.

Limitation of the study.

Out of the 94 questionnaires distributed to respondents within the county government, 74 were returned, representing a response rate of approximately 78.7%. Such outcomes are common in public sector surveys, where heavy administrative workloads, absenteeism due to official duties, and occasional reluctance to share information limit participation. After screening for completeness and consistency, 3 of the returned questionnaires were discarded as spoilt, leaving 72 valid responses. This represents a usable response rate of 76.6%, which is methodologically acceptable for applied research. Recent empirical studies emphasize that response rates between 40% and 75% are generally adequate in social science research, provided that data quality checks are observed (Akbulut, Soydan, & Ulukan, 2021). Furthermore, national-level surveys in Kenya, such as the Time Use Survey (2021), have recorded response rates above 80%, while the Afro barometer (2022) reported a 65% return rate, illustrating that variation in response levels is typical and context-dependent. Accordingly, the 72 valid questionnaires were considered sufficient to support meaningful analysis and reliable conclusions within the scope of this study.

RESULTS

The section discusses descriptive and inferential statistics on effect of working conditions and employee commitment

Descriptive Statistical Results

The descriptive findings for working conditions were in terms of percentages, means and standard deviations based on a 5-point Likert scale where SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree and SA=Strongly Agree. The respondents were asked to state the level of agreement to various propositions on working conditions and employee commitment and the findings are represented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Working Conditions

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	StdDev
A better working environment makes me perform better at my work	41.7	51.4	1.4	2.8	2.8	4.26	.856

I am provided with a conducive environment that gives me ample time to perform my duties	25.0	61.1	2.8	11.1	0	4.0 0	.856
My working area is adequate and spacious	9.7	16.7	1.4	55.6	16.7	2.4 7	1.233
The County Government has provided me with good and safe work conditions	5.6	25.0	0	51.4	18.1	2.4 9	1.210
I have flexible work arrangement that makes me feel satisfied hence being committed to the organization	26.4	59.7	5.6	6.9	1.4	4.0 3	.855
The working conditions in the county enables me receive assistance from my co-workers whenever I need the assistance	26.4	61.1	6.9	5.6	0	4.0 8	.746
The County Government does not place unreasonable expectations from work	29.2	59.7	5.6	5.6	0	4.1 3	.749

The descriptive statistics on working conditions, as presented in Table 1, provide critical insights into employees' perceptions of their workplace environment within Nyandarua County Government.

A large majority of employees agreed with this statement (93.1%), yielding a high mean score of 4.26. This underscores the widely acknowledged role of the workplace environment in driving employee productivity. Kangethe (2022) found that improvements in the work environment within Embu County's public service accounted for 75.3% of variance in job performance, affirming the direct and measurable link between working conditions and employee effectiveness.

Despite this recognition, employees rated the adequacy of their physical workspaces and the safety of work conditions relatively poorly, with mean scores of 2.47 and 2.49, respectively. These results indicate dissatisfaction with infrastructural and safety provisions, pointing to critical gaps that may undermine performance if left unaddressed. The importance of safe and adequate physical conditions cannot be overstated, as poor workplace infrastructure has been associated with lower productivity and employee disengagement across diverse organizational contexts (Kangethe 2022).

By contrast, perceptions of flexibility and co-worker support were highly positive. A significant majority of respondents expressed agreement that flexible work arrangements contributed to their satisfaction and commitment, yielding a mean score of 4.03. Similarly, the ability to receive assistance from co-workers when needed was rated positively (mean = 4.08). These findings resonate strongly with Gichana & Ombui (2022) who demonstrated that flexible work schedules had a robust positive correlation with employee productivity ($r = .893$) in Nairobi Courts. This suggests that flexibility not only supports work-life balance but also enhances organizational outcomes. Furthermore, supportive peer relations foster collaboration, problem-solving, and resilience, reinforcing organizational performance in dynamic work environments (Wang 2022).

Finally, employees expressed confidence that Nyandarua County Government does not impose unreasonable expectations, with 65.3% agreeing and a mean of 4.13. This indicates that workload management practices are largely perceived as fair and sustainable. The implication is that when organizational demands align with employees' capacity, morale and commitment are strengthened, thereby reducing burnout and turnover risks (Wang 2022).

Taken together, the results paint a balanced picture. Nyandarua County Government appears to have established supportive managerial practices, flexible arrangements, and a culture of collaboration—all of which significantly contribute to employee motivation, performance and commitment. However, the low ratings for safety and physical adequacy of workspaces highlight infrastructural shortcomings that could impede long-term productivity. These findings align with empirical studies in Kenya and beyond, which consistently demonstrate that investments in both tangible workplace infrastructure and flexible, supportive policies produce optimal organizational outcomes (Gichana & Ombui 2022).

Therefore, descriptive statistics affirm that while social and managerial support mechanisms are strong in this context, the physical dimension of the workplace remains a weak point requiring urgent attention. Addressing these infrastructural challenges, while sustaining flexible and supportive work practices, offers a strategic pathway for County Governments to improve employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance.

Measurement of Employee Commitment

The respondents were asked on the level of agreement to various propositions based on a 5-point Likert scale on employee commitment and the findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Commitment

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	StdDev
I am committed to the company's goals and objectives	37.5	58.3	0	4.2	0	4.29	.680
I will remain in the organization to save organization's cost incurred recruitment and training	36.1	51.4	5.6	5.6	1.4	4.15	.867
I feel have invested a lot of my effort, time and expertise in the county that I would not just leave	44.4	51.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	4.36	.718
The County Government deserves my loyalty and therefore I feel I should stay	40.3	44.4	9.7	5.6	0	4.19	.833
I feel that my rights as an employee are protected in the organization	45.8	41.7	6.9	4.2	1.4	4.26	.872
I feel a moral obligation to remain in the organization	47.2	41.7	6.9	2.8	1.4	4.31	.833
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization	58.3	36.1	2.8	2.8	0	4.50	.692

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 2 offer valuable insights into the extent of employee commitment within Nyandarua County Government. Findings reveal strong levels of commitment across multiple dimensions, though notable variations exist in how employees perceive different aspects of organizational loyalty and belonging. The highest level of commitment is reflected in the item *"I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization,"* which recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .692$). This suggests that employees have developed strong affective ties to the organization, a hallmark of emotional commitment. Such affective commitment is critical, as it is closely linked to employee retention and performance (Mwangangi 2022).

Statements reflecting moral and normative commitment, such as *"I feel a moral obligation to remain in the organization"* ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .833$) and *"The County Government deserves my loyalty and therefore I should stay"* ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .833$), also yielded high scores. These results indicate that employees not only identify with their organization emotionally but also feel a sense of duty to remain loyal. This aligns with findings by (Tüzüner & Çam 2022) observed that normative commitment plays a crucial role in sustaining employee retention, particularly in the Kenyan public sector where moral obligation is tied to a sense of service delivery. Interestingly, the item *"I will remain in the organization to save recruitment and training costs"* received a slightly lower mean ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .867$) compared to other statements. This suggests that continuance commitment—staying for cost-benefit reasons—is present but less emphasized than affective or moral dimensions. This is consistent with broader literature indicating that employees are more motivated to remain when they feel emotionally connected or morally obligated, rather than staying purely for instrumental reasons (Wang 2022).

Correlation Analysis Results

Correlation analysis is used to describe how two distributions of scores are related to each other and indicates the strength and a direction of the relationship between variables. Table 3 presents Pearson's correlation of working conditions and employee commitment.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

		Working Conditions
Employee Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.302**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010
	N	72
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

The analysis established that there was a weak positive but significant ($r=.302$, $p=.000$) relationship between working conditions and employee commitment. The researcher therefore observed that working conditions have an important role in determining employees' commitment. Hence, in order to enhance employee commitment, working conditions must also be enhanced. Amis (2020) opined that good working conditions motivate employees in terms of safety and comfort while poor working conditions can result to bad health and discomfort. Employees exposed to a good working condition are likely to be more productive and highly motivated. Where the workers are provided with amenities such as health services, the living standards as well as improved productivity result to reduced absenteeism and labour turnover. A satisfied, happy and hardworking employee is biggest asset of any organisation. Effective work environment encourages the happier employee with their job that ultimately influence organizational growth.

Regression Analysis Results

Regression analysis on the other hand is a statistical process of estimating the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. The study undertook regression analysis between work conditions and employee commitment and the model summary findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Model Summary

Indicator	Coefficient
R	.302
R Square	.091
Adjusted R Square	.078
Standard Error of the Estimate	.55505

The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.302$) shows that there is a positive but weak relationship between the independent variable(s) and the dependent variable. According to Cohen (1988), an R value between 0.10 and 0.29 indicates a small effect size, while values between 0.30 and 0.49 suggest a medium effect size. Thus, an R of 0.302 implies that the predictors have a modest influence on the outcome variable.

The coefficient of determination ($R \text{ Square} = 0.091$) indicates that approximately 9.1% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable(s) included in the model. This means that while the predictors contribute to the outcome, the majority of the variance (about 90.9%) is influenced by other factors not captured in the model.

The Adjusted R Square (.078) corrects for the number of predictors in the model and the sample size, providing a more conservative estimate of explanatory power. This suggests that when accounting for sampling error and number of predictors, the independent variable(s) explain about 7.8% of the variance in the dependent variable.

Finally, the Standard Error of the Estimate (0.55505) represents the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. A lower value indicates a better fit. In this case, the standard error suggests moderate accuracy in predicting the dependent variable, with some level of unexplained variation remaining in the model.

Empirically, these results suggest that the independent variable(s) studied have a statistically weak but significant influence on the dependent variable in the county government context. The R Square of 9.1% implies that the explanatory power of the model is limited, but not negligible. In social science and public administration research, such modest explanatory values are common because human behavior, institutional performance, and governance processes are shaped by multiple overlapping factors (Akbulut 2021).

This outcome also reflects findings in recent empirical studies in Kenya, where governance and administrative performance models often yield low to moderate R Square values due to the complexity of contextual, political, and institutional dynamics (Afrobarometer, 2022). Therefore, while the model does not explain a large proportion of variance, it still provides important insights into the specific contribution of the predictors under study, which can be built upon in future research with additional variables or refined instruments.

Table 5 shows the analysis of variance (ANOVA) findings.

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.162	1	2.162	7.017	.010 ^b
	Residual	21.566	70	.308		
	Total	23.728	71			

From the table analysis of variance gave an F-value of ($F_{(1, 70)} = 7.017$, $p = .010$) which was significant at $p < .05$ level of significance. Therefore, working condition had a significant influence on employee commitment. The null hypothesis that working conditions have no statistically significant influence on employee commitment was therefore rejected. This finding validates the model's predictive relevance despite its modest explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.091$). In the context of Nyandarua county government, the results imply that the studied factor makes a significant contribution to performance outcomes, even though other unmeasured variables account for the majority of the variation. These results mirror broader empirical evidence in governance studies, where institutional performance is rarely explained by a single factor but instead emerges from the interaction of multiple determinants (Afrobarometer, 2022). Consequently, while the factor investigated is statistically significant, it should be addressed as part of a wider reform framework that integrates complementary drivers of county government performance. The study therefore concluded that working conditions significantly influenced employee commitment. The findings on the regression coefficients are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.120	.449		6.956	.000
Work Conditions	.323	.122	.302	2.649	.010

The regression coefficients presented in Table 6 indicate that work conditions have a statistically significant positive effect on the dependent variable ($B = 0.323$, $t = 2.649$, $p = .010$). This implies that an improvement in work conditions by one unit leads to a 0.323 increase in the outcome, confirming that better workplace

environments contribute to higher levels of performance. The standardized coefficient ($\text{Beta} = .302$) further demonstrates that work conditions exert a moderate effect size, highlighting their practical importance in shaping organizational outcomes. Although the overall explanatory power of the model was modest ($R^2 = 0.091$), these results underscore that work conditions are an essential determinant of employee and institutional performance in county governments. This finding aligns with empirical evidence that governance outcomes are driven by multiple, overlapping factors, but workplace quality consistently emerges as a critical enabler of effective service delivery (Akbulut & Ulukan, 2021). Similarly, as opined by Amis & Janz (2020), good working conditions motivate employees in terms of safety and comfort while poor working conditions can result to bad health and discomfort. Therefore, policies aimed at strengthening service delivery should integrate interventions that enhance work environments such as improving infrastructure, providing adequate resources, and ensuring fair workload management alongside broader reforms. The study therefore established that working conditions was a significant predictor of employee commitment.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that a better working environment makes employees to perform better at their work. Further, the study concluded that a conducive environment gives employees ample time to perform their duties. Similarly, the study concluded that flexible work arrangement makes employees to feel satisfied. Furthermore, it was concluded that good working conditions enabled employees to receive assistance from their co-workers whenever needed. Similarly, the study concluded that lack of unreasonable expectations from work enhanced employee commitment. From the subsequent correlation analysis, it was concluded that there was a weak positive but significant relationship between working condition and employee commitment. Furthermore, from the linear regression, the study concluded that working conditions had a statistically significant influence on employee commitment. This meant that, working conditions plays an important role in determining the level of employee commitment.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommended the need for County Governments to come up with working policies that would assist in improving the working conditions of their employees. This was particularly important since working conditions play a significant role in enhancing employees' commitment and thus would lead to an improvement in the overall county performance. The study therefore recommended the need for County Governments to set in place policies that will aid in enhancing the employee commitment.

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