

## Recruitment Practice and Employee Commitment in Selected County Governments in Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

Despite having the HR department and professionals the selected county governments have little to show on service delivery; as employee commitment continue to decline. The purpose of the study was evaluate the effect of recruitment practice and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The study adopted Equity theory. The study adopted mixed research design. Qualitative as well as quantitative research methods were used. Proportionate sampling was used to select five County governments out of forty-seven. Out of target population of 12,990 employees, a sample size of 384 respondents was selected through stratified sampling. A pilot test was carried out to reduce the chances of instrumentation error like weakness in design, increased the data collection's reliability and checked the internal consistency of the data collection instrument. The descriptive results displayed percentages for variables on five-point Likert scale. Discussion based on mean and standard deviation was arrived. Correlation was used to determine the relationships between the individual independent variables and dependent variable. The study indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between the recruitment practice and employee commitment in the selected county governments in Kenya. Univariate regression analysis was used to establish the effect of individual independent variable on dependent variable employee commitment. A multiple regression model was used to establish the effect of relationship in the selected county governments in Kenya. HRM practices combined without the moderator explained the variation on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The study concluded that employee recruitment had a significant relationship on employee commitment in the selected county government in Kenya.

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### 1.0 Introduction

Critical ingredients in global development are resources; governments worldwide would like to utilize available resources especially human resources for the purpose of growth and development (Waktola, 2021). Therefore commitment from employees becomes paramount for these purposes. Ahmad et al. (2020) suggest that employee commitment serve several benefits which include; strong desire to achieve goals, strong desire to stay in the organization, belongingness, improved organization performance, increased effectiveness, and attachment to an organizations, improved job satisfaction, and reduced turnover. However, employee commitment is a global problem that affects public sector both in developed and developing countries (Donkor & Zhuo, 2020). Globally absence of committed employees contributed to reduced profitability emanating from unachieved organization goals, high turnover rates, and increased costs. Globally 85% of employees are not committed at work; this means that only 15% of the global workforce is actively committed to their jobs (Wang & Wang, 2022). Asian literature revealed that countries like Malaysia and Thailand scored 48% in employee commitment, on the other hand in Netherlands, the score was above global average at 31% which was comparable with Southern and Eastern Europe, (Kalia, Singla & Kaushal, 2023). This resulted high costs in terms of recruitment, training and development, claims and compensation, and subsequently decreased productivity and profitability.

A study conducted by Office of personnel management in USA revealed that on average 29% of employees in USA are committed in their work. The contributing factors included; poor leadership, lack of career development opportunities, inadequate compensation, unclear job expectations, poor work-life balance, lack of recognition, a negative company culture, effective communication, and a perceived lack of fairness in treatment, often feeling of disengagement and a lack of loyalty to organization. Low employee commitment costs companies in USA up

to the tune of \$1.8 billion each year; this included costs related to absenteeism, turnover, and decrease productivity (Office of Personnel Management, 2022). From the literature, it was evident that employee commitment declined as time goes by, with significant percentages dropping globally. As a result, each organization across the globe comes up with its own practices to deal with the commitment challenge (Armstrong, 2019). The existing global studies as however, differed significantly on the best practices that would enhance employee commitment. The focus of European countries such as the United Kingdom, Spain, France, and Italy have been on financial motivation, promotion, transfer, product development, and advertising. While studies revealed that the organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) believed leadership, succession planning and organizational culture would increase the likelihood of obtaining better returns in employee investments (Benkarim & Imbeau, 2021). However, it was from these significant findings both in Europe and in the OECD, which revealed a While studies do not deny low levels of employee commitment globally, it raised dilemma on combination of HRM practices that would enhance employee commitment. Universal approach routes for practices applicable across all the organization irrespective of the context, culture, or size (Benkarim & Imbeau, 2021). On the other hand contingency approach argues that employee commitment improves through linking human resource strategy and the general organization strategy (Wang & Wang 2022). Joseph, Deshpande and Gupta, (2023) report on organizational failure and success as result of perceived HR practices for prosperity showed mixed reaction. There were extreme high levels of organization failures in Greece, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Australia. These countries reported reduction in organization productivity, and profitability. There was however, increase in business growth, and increased revenue in countries like France, Japan, and China as result of applied HRM best practices.

A significant body of knowledge was in consensus that among Asian countries such as Turkey, Kuwait, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, with robust human resource management practices such as performance appraisal contributed significantly to employee commitment both in private and public institutions (Ahmad et al. 2020). Most organizations in Asian countries showed a significant change in employee commitment by measuring employee performance using 360° performance feedback; but showed unsatisfactory change among Africa countries that reported little change in their levels of employee commitment (Waktola, 2021). However, the proportion of changes in employee commitment resulting from HRM practices remained unknown. Perceiving that a high proportion of satisfactory changes as result of desirable HRM practices contribute to high levels of employee commitment globally cannot be underestimated.

In Africa there is consensus that employees are the most critical intellectual capital driving the productive devolved governments (Abozed & Salem, 2020). Few successful devolved governments in Africa depended on HRM's ability to effectively harness human capital to generate assets, goods and services that surpass expectations (Nansamba, et al. 2024). Utilization of available resources particularly human resources is important in sparring growth and development of devolved governments in Africa however, impediment to this is commitment from these resources (Kamila, 2022). The challenges to employee commitment exist when there is need to achieve organization goals. Employee commitment in African worsens due to conflicting goals especially when employee goals are not aligned to organization goals (Donkor & Zhuo, 2020). Ingebedion (2022) advanced reasons that result to low employee commitment to be recruitment mismatch, limited training, inequity in remuneration, and unmanaged employee performance. Nansamba, et al. (2024) research in Uganda showed variation of 60.5% among organizations which reported problem in retaining employees of all ages than hiring them. Comparison of Ugandans experience in hiring revealed that commitment levels vary across African countries with some countries like Senegal reported 35% of organization which experienced challenges in retaining than hiring. In South Africa Ingrid and Kelebogile (2021) study on socio-demographics indicated that older employees and separated/divorced or widowed employees had higher organizational commitment while younger employees and contract workers had marginally higher organizational trust. In general the study further revealed South Africa's experience; 80% of employees were likely to be committed as result of positive organizational sentiments while 74% of employees were likely to be committed as result of employee voice.

In Nigeria, a study of Ingebedion (2022) suggests that employees are not committed to their jobs in most organizations. Unemployment rate in Nigeria posed a big constraint to mobility of labor and thus increases the possibility of disguised commitment. Further the results indicated that stunted mobility, extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation and organizational climate are significant motivators of employee commitment in Nigeria. Bizunesh et al. (2023) study aver that in Ethiopia high level of organizational commitment was associated to satisfaction with recognition, work climate, supervisor support and workload. Besides good practice of transformational and transactional leadership styles and employee empowerment were significantly associated with high organizational commitment. However, the overall level of organizational commitment was a bit low. To improve organizational commitment the study recommended adoption of best HRM practices.

County governments in Kenya have very crucial role to play especially in development agenda of the country. Development of the Kenya is greatly contributed by committed employees within county government (Njoroge, Kihoro, & Kosgei 2020). Employee commitment has become an area of concern given the ever changing work place and the need to achieve devolution goals in Kenya. With this in mind achieving employee commitment call for prudent recruitment and selection, training of senior and newly recruited employees, remuneration that constitute not only monetary but also non-monetary and enabling employee set targets, evaluation conducted throughout the year and making decision based on employee performance (Mwaniki & Omuya 2024). Achieving employee commitment from human resource management point of view has been a problem for most organizations in Kenya county governments is no exception. Nasimiyu and Egessa (2021) state that organization where employees are not committed to organization goal may experience conflict in efforts to achieve individual goals leading to lower commitment to either goal. This affects how employees put effort to their works causing serious performance problems and subsequent exits (Mwaniki & Omuya 2024). When county government lose talented employees who work with citizen service at heart, means that county governments spend more time replacing employees not mentioning compensation costs.

Council of Governors report (2024) suggest that 50% of employees among County governments in Kenya are willing to leave but there are no alternatives while 40% of employees were committed because of privileges they received and a significant 30% were committed because of other people in the system. Cited factors contributing to the undesired employee commitment included uncompetitive salaries and benefits, poor work environment, unhealthy balance between work and personal lives; limited opportunities for growth and advancement (Ongadi & Juma 2020). If employee commitment is not addressed it has serious consequence among county governments in Kenya such as decreases productivity.

Awino and Korir (2020) attributed the low levels of employee commitment to an ineffective combination of HRM practices. The county governments in Kenya inherited and recruited a large number of employees but were inefficient as service delivery continue to decline. In response, it recommended reforms such as downsizing, rationalization of pay and benefits (Auditor General, 2022). Although, this resulted to a lean workforce, however, the problems of poor service delivery had become a torn in flesh among county governments in Kenya in the recent past. The Auditor General report showed that whereas national government in Kenya reported significant improvement in commitment to goals, this was not the case in County governments in Kenya.

In an approach to managing employee commitment, county governments introduced several tools to measure performance among others include; Balance Score Card, 360-degree performance feedback, Management by Objective, Key Performance Indicators, and Personal Development Plans (Mwema, Were, & Ndeti, 2022). These led to improvement in commitment to goals. However, numerous challenges that affected employee commitment were noted among county governments in Kenya; lack of ethical standards on performance management, lack of resources to support achievement, political mind set and attitudes, bureaucratic process, lack of qualified and skilled staff, and employee resistance (CoG, 2024).

County governments are critical in development agenda in Kenya; achievement of Vision 2030 social economic pillars and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), however, without employee commitment these cannot be achieved (Mwaniki & Omuya 2024). Despite having experts and experienced professionals; and billions of financial resources the selected county governments have little to show on service delivery; as employees decline to offer substantial services (Auditor General Report 2022). The selected county governments for the past years have experience declined in employee commitment; this resulted to increased costs and reduction in achievement of goals. The way employee commitment is being handled is wanting, and if not addressed it has got far much reaching effect on service delivery, and development agenda of the selected county governments in Kenya.

Taiko (2024) study reported that in 2023 county governments in Kenya experience turnover rate of 25% of top talented professionals. This has resulted to a significant 43% reduction in time of completion of development projects and 51% increase in audit queries. The report indicated that county governments with turnover rates exceeding 20% experienced a 32% decrease in budget utilization, this directly affected service delivery. Council of Governors reported that 66% of County governments in Kenya are operating with critical skill gaps, particularly in specialized areas such as information technology, finance and project management. These skill gaps have led to 37% decrease in the successful implementation development projects in county governments' and a 29% decline service delivery. Further, Council of Governors (2024) reported that 50% of employees in County governments in Kenya are willing to leave but there are no alternatives, 40% of employees were committed in achieving goals because of certain privileges and a significant 30% were committed because of

systemic advantages. The repercussions of decreased employee commitment resulted to 48% of goal not fulfilled in the selected county governments in Kenya. Obtaining employee commitment in the selected county government has been associated with HRM practices yet studies exploring this association remain inadequate and presented gaps in context, methodology and concept. Obunga, Were, and Muchelule (2024) findings showed that compensation is positively and significantly related to employee retention in non-governmental organizations in Kenya. The study however suffered contextual gap, findings from non-governmental setup could not be generalized in public sector. Awino and Korir (2020) found that career training and reward system positively and significantly influenced employee commitment of manufacturing firms in Kenya. However, the study presented methodological gaps; as they collected only quantitative data, and ignored qualitative thereby the study did not provide more insight of the findings. Aden and Omuya (2024) findings showed that staff retention is positively correlated with performance of State Corporation in Kenya. The study presented conceptual gaps as it did not demonstrate how HRM practices could be moderated by HR policy to explain employee commitment. Hence the existing evidence could not be generalized to the selected county government in Kenya. Therefore, this study fills these research gaps by examining recruitment practices on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya.

## 2.0. Recruitment Practice

Armstrong (2019) defines recruitment as identifying and soliciting individuals from within or outside the organization to fill vacancies. Recruitment includes the entire hiring process, beginning from search to onboarding of employee to the organization. Employees are crucial assets that have the potential to prosper the organization. Employees are responsible for influencing customers and driving revenue. Recruitment enables organization onboard employees that match with organization needs and goals (Nderitu & Makhamara, 2021). Recruitment is important as it influences variety of outcome within human resource management: performance, engagement and employee commitment etc. The question to recruit employee with commitment has been a subjected to debates, that attracted various understanding, with researcher calling for further comprehensive studies. The argument of Njoroge, Nzulwa and Kwen (2021) described recruitment as the process of attracting a large pool of qualified people for employment. This involved the development of job descriptions, job analysis, and advertisements. Njoroge, Kihoro and Kosgei (2020) posit selections, on the other hand, as the process of making decisions on whom get employed and this included screening, sorting, testing, interviewing, and references checks. Nderitu and Makhamara (2021) explained rigorous recruitment process inform of written test and interviews that help the recruiter to identify talented candidates for the job.

Mugambi, Fridah and Omuya (2023) noted a complex recruitment process that can be used to increase the chance of hiring people with the right skills, which match individual ability and organizational requirements. They cautioned organizations on recruitment of incompetent candidates as they may come along with future heavy costs, which the organization may not be able to afford. Aden and Muya (2024) explained three phases of recruitment that organizations use to increase the chances of hiring committed candidate for the existing job. The first two phases are carried out to ensure that there was a large pool of applicants; thus, screening and interviews. Screening is the preliminary determination to ascertain if a job applicant qualifies for the position. The purpose of interview is to allow employer assess candidates; skills, experiences, personality, and determine commitment fitness by asking questions through conversations. Third, the assessment process was conducted to get the best candidate from a large number of applications. These phases showed that recruitment was concerned with searching for candidates and attracting them to apply for jobs. Then it follows that whatever happens during this process determines the kind of commitment that employee have in the organization (Mugambi, Fridah & Omuya 2023).

Armstrong (2019) suggests that interviews helped to demonstrate aspirations, highlighted skills and attitudes to which the organization attached significance to individual commitment to the job. Nderitu and Makhamara (2021) states that the interviews process determine competencies; qualifications, interpersonal skills, and work experience necessary to determine commitment that employee attaches to the available job. Interview presents a sophisticated process which enhanced an organization to selects the best candidate. Kidagisa and Mukannzi (2021) holds contrary view that consultant preferred to carry out interviews not only are costly but also denied organizations the chance to identify committed candidate. While, improper interviews may attract legal action, careless assessment may result to hiring of incompetent employees without requisite commitment to the job. Kidagisa and Mukanzi (2021) discussed the central issue when it came to screening thus single sourcing of employees. This was not only the cheapest form of recruitment but also presents an opportunity to identify employees who had low voluntary (stay longer) turnover as well as those with low involuntary turnover (not easily dismissed). They revealed that improper screening would lead to early resistance thus early exit of potential candidates. Although, screening may not be effective because it may not determine job fit, but it

promotes employee commitment through promotions, placement transfers, recalls, and hiring for the second time.

Sylvia (2021) describes assessment as a process of identifying the most appropriate candidate for the job. Furthermore, assessment involved sorting with the purpose of separating qualifications, skills, knowledge, ability, and identify potential candidate to fill the vacant position. Assessment as expressed enabled organization to obtain qualified and talented candidates for the job. However, the assessment affect employee commitment as it becomes lengthy and costly thus causing dissatisfaction and wrong selection of candidates. The study informed the danger of the wrong assessment of candidates in terms of the cost of turnover, poor performance, and customer dissatisfaction. Kidagisa and Mukanzi (2021) the findings of the study resulted in an understanding that employee recruitment practice significantly influence employee performance. The study recommended that firms should streamline recruitment practices in order to improve employee performance. The findings of this study would help organizations use results to assess what decision making processes could be used to increase not only employee performance but also employee commitment.

Mugambi, Fridah and Omuya (2023) study on recruitment and selection on employee performance uncovered a noteworthy positive correlation between various human resource functions, including recruitment and selection within public universities in Meru County. The study determined that approximately 46.1% of variation in employee performance could be attributed collectively to the utilization of recruitment and selection. The study concluded that recruitment and selection exerted the most significant influence on employee performance. The study recommended that public institution prioritize the enhancement of individual components within their human resource functions rather than option for a holistic approach.

Rionkoine, Nzioki and Kiama (2024) studied effect of e-recruitment on employee performance in Kajiado county government. Regression coefficients showed that e-recruitment had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The study commended that governments of Kenya should encourage all counties to embrace e-recruitment process. This was because e-recruitment minimizes paperwork and related costs. Also Counties should use digital databases for their employees to minimize forgery and also for easier tracking of applicant. The recruitment practice used in this study ought to be adopted by other county governments since it enables them identify employees with high commitment levels. Nderitu and Makhamara (2021) investigated the effect of recruitment and selection on employee performance among private secondary schools Nyeri County in Kenya. The study sampled 440 respondents. The study revealed statistical significance of interviews, selections, and inductions on employee performance. Additionally, the study, found a shortfall in the private secondary schools interview process, as it lacked a coherent and structured interview process. The study exposed common mistakes in interview process that county governments needed to avoid since it may affect employee commitment. Njoroge, Nzulwa and Kweni (2021) examined determinates of employee turnover in non-governmental organization in Kenya. The study identified different recruitment methods used by NGOs in Kenya. The findings revealed that one of the determinants of employee turnover in John Hopkins was recruitment. The findings revealed that recruitment had direct impact on how long employee would stay in NGO. The willingness to work, stay, and leave the organization, suggest that recruitment explains normative, continuance and employee affective commitments.

A study carried out by Nansamba et al. (2024) on recruitment and selection on employee commitment in Uganda's private universities. The regression results showed a negative and insignificant influence of recruitment on commitment. The selection process, on the other hand, was found to have a positive impact on employee commitment. The process was found to be bureaucratic, which led to the biased selection of potential candidates. This affected commitment at the beginning of employment relations. The quality of employees that an organization accumulated over time heavily depended on the recruitment process. As such the institutions need to be careful in conceptualizing recruitment; choosing, and matching fit so as to avoid making determination of candidates' commitment suitability difficult. The quest to define and understand employee commitment in research gained prominence in the field of human resource management because of its capability to earn organization competitive advantage. Armstrong (2019) suggests that employee commitment influences customer satisfaction, implementation of new ideas, employee intention to stay as well as goal achievement and performance. Subsequently, Meyer and Allan (1997) three dimensions thus affective; continuance and normative commitment have been accepted to explain employee commitment. Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment that employee has to the organization. As such when employees have strong identification and attachment to their organizational goals and values they said to have affective commitment.

Robinson (2023) describes continuance commitment as the psychological association with the feeling that benefits are the reason employees are attached to the organization. Leaving to them with continuance



commitment, amount to losing the benefits attached to their jobs. Continuance commitment binds the employee with the organization and remaining as a member is a utilitarian necessity. Normative commitment has the connection to employees feeling that it is unethical behavior leaving the organization. With normative commitment employees perceive that they are obliged to continue to work for the organization. Saraih et al. (2020) associated employee commitment with employee loyalty and organizational performance. As a result, commitment from employers and employees had become vital. This situation often than not have pressurized employers to ensure that their employees achieve their goals, which can only be done if the organization attracted and retained qualify workforce. The study suggests that employees without loyalty are always not ready to perform duties, even with external pressure, and they are more likely to leave the organization. There was emerging evidence that incentives and empowerment contributed to employee commitment (Murray & Holmes, 2021). The literature revealed that limited incentives and low empowerment resulted to low work commitment. This discussion led to a suitable design of HRM practices that would increase employee commitment which in turn influences retention and profitability. The study perceived that organizations which addressed people related issues tended to reap more from their employees commitments.

Mwaniki and Omuya (2024) assessed the influence of employee commitment on performance of state department in Kenya. The collected data was analyzed through descriptive and correlation analysis. The results showed that employee commitment improved productivity, service delivery, cost efficiency and positive work environment. The correlation findings between variables revealed that; organization commitment, and performance are strong and significant. Ndai, and Makhamara (2020) generally agreed that human resource management best practices; training, recruitment, remuneration and performance management are what organizations can incorporate to achieve positive changes in employee commitment. The study suggests employee commitment as an important factor for the fulfillment of organizational goals as committed employees contribute immensely towards organizational performance.

Ngeyen et al. (2020) study investigated the impact of participation in decision making and perceived organization support on affective commitment in machinery enterprises. The study results provided empirical evidence to support theoretical model that participation and organization support had positive effect on affective commitment. The findings also had implication for management in the organization that managers should offer practical participation both in decision making and perceived organization support. Marhaba et al. (2021) the research determined the factors that plays an essential role in identifying employee commitment to university teachers. Multiple regression analysis was conducted; the results showed that procedural justice and career development had significant relationship with employees' commitment. In contrast, work motivation, training opportunities, and work environment had insignificant relationship with employee commitment.

Chigeda, et al. (2022) the study examined the effect of emotional intelligence, work-life balance support and work-related stress on organizational continuance commitment of workers in Zimbabwe. Quantitative cross-section data were collected from 212 workers among independently owned schools. Correlation and multiple regressions were used to analyze data. Positive and significant relationship were found between the all the three predictors and organizational continuance commitment. Reviews of literature on human resource management practices were extensive however they presented conflicting dimensions on employee commitment. Universal approach routes practices that were applicable across all the organization irrespective of the size (Benkarim & Imbeau, 2021). On the other hand contingency approach argues that employee commitment improves through linking human resource strategy and the general organization strategy (Wang & Wang 2022). The current study observed that there could be underlying factors not elaborated by these approaches that need to be taken into account and this calls for determination of employee commitment considering specific HRM practices.

Literature reviewed provided conflicting result on training variables and employee commitment. While some studies found relationship between training and employee commitment others did not. The case in point was Awino and Korir (2021) who found career training had positive and significant effect on employee commitment. Contrary to this, other study found no relationship between two variables; motivation to learn and the perceived benefit of the training on employee commitment (Chepkoskey, Namusonge, and Makokha 2019). There was need to carry a study in the selected county governments in Kenya to a certain these findings. The literature reviewed had demonstrated that recruitment practice contributed to employee commitment. However, studies differed on understanding the concept of recruitment practice. Njoroge and Nzulwa (2021) described recruitment as the process of attracting a large pool of qualified people for employment while Njoroge, Kihoro and Kosgei (2020) separated selection from recruitment and posit selections, as the process of making decisions on whom get employed. Some researchers did agree with recruitment as requisite for employee commitment, while others have argued that whatever happens during the recruitment process determined the commitment that employee

had to the organization.

Studies such as Kamau and Omondi (2020) report that financial rewards yielded good motivation results up to certain point on the ladder, it declined and produced poor motivational results. Further the study of Nsoedo, and Sonna (2020), noted high voluntary turnover among employees who valued monetary rewards as part of their compensation package. From the literature reviewed it can be identified that studies have been skewed towards monetary practice and have error on explaining employee commitment due to their failure to incorporate non-financial practice. The instance that combining the financial and non-financial remunerations was the only basis for achieving employee commitment needed to be studied.

The literatures on employee commitment have been discussed differently by different studies. In some cases, it had been discussed as a dependent variable (Murray & Holmes, 2021, Ngeyen et al. 2020). Some scholars have considered employee commitment as independent variables, which influenced outcome variables such as loyalty, engagement, and performance (Mwaniki & Omuya 2024, Saraih et al. 2020). On the other hand, employee commitments have been discussed as a moderating variable. There are no central positions that have been taken on whether employee commitment can be considered as an independent, dependent or moderating variable in research studies. The current study was carried out with clear position that employee commitment is dependent variable.

### 3.0. Method

The study adopted a mixed research design. The study targeted 12,990 employees working in the selected county government (CIDP, 2022). The sample size for the study was 384 as per Cochran's formula, of (margin error  $e=0.05$ ), and confidence level (95%  $Z=1.96$ ) as well as estimated proportion of the attribute present in the population (50% $p=0.5$ ) from Elgeyo Marakwet county 74, Baringo county 68, Tans Nzoia County 86, West Pokot County 65 and Bungoama County 91. The total sample size for the study was 384. Data collection instrument was questionnaire where both primary secondary data was collected. Piloting was done to test the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. The researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze data quantitative data. The descriptive analysis involved, measurement of central tendency for data collected in closed ended questionnaire (David al. 2010). Data was analyzed in accordance to the objectives of the study, SPSS software version 20 was used which assisted in generating frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviation, graphs and tables.

### 4.0. Discussion

Nderitu & Makhamara, (2021), noted that complex recruitment process was used so as to increase the chance of hiring people with right skills, which match individual ability and organization requirement. The human resources that organizations get depend on recruitment process. The second objective sought to evaluate recruitment practice and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The findings are presented in a five-point likerts scale where SA=strongly agree, A=agree, NAD= Neither Agree nor Disagree, D=disagree, and SD=strongly disagree. The results of the descriptive statistics on recruitment practice are shown in the frequency table 4.10 showing the distribution on the percentage of respondents. Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) as the measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion on each statement.

**Table 4.1: Recruitment Practice and Employee Commitment in Selected County Governments in Kenya**

Statements Recruitment Practice		SD	D	NAD	A	SA	M	SD
Employee applications are screened	%	16.4	11.8	30.9	35.5	5.5	3.29	.97
During screening applicant's resume is required	%	10.9	27.3	19.1	36.4	6.4	3.68	1.23
Interviews avoids chances of bias recruitment	%	5.5	22.7	17.3	41.8	12.7	2.93	1.68
Assessment of appropriate employee is done through competitive process	%	21.8	6.4	18.2	52.7	0.9	4.36	.91
During assessment background check is required	%	19.6	12.5	15.3	48.7	4.9	3.64	.95

From Table 4.1 the respondents were asked whether employee applications are screened in county. The distribution of findings showed that 5.5 percent of the respondents strongly agreed, 35.5 percent of them agreed, 30.9 percent of the respondents were neutral, 11.8 percent disagreed while 16.4 percent of them strongly disagreed. The mean response was found to be  $M=3.29$ , which shows that on average respondents agreed that employee applications in counties are screened. A standard deviation of  $SD=0.97$  shows that there are variations from the average response.

Table 4.1; the respondents were also asked whether during screening applicant resume was required. The distribution of the responses indicated that 6.4 percent strongly agreed to the statement, 36.4 percent of them agreed, and 19.1 percent of them were neutral, 27.3 percent of them disagreed while 10.9 percent of them strongly disagreed to the statement. On average as implied by mean score  $M=3.68$ , the respondents agreed that during screening applicant resume was required. A standard deviation of  $SD=1.23$  showed that there are variations from the average response.

Table 4.1; the respondents were also asked whether interviews avoided the chances of biased recruitment. The distribution of the responses indicated that 12.7 percent strongly agreed to the statement, 41.8 percent of them agreed, and 17.3 percent of them were neutral, 22.7 percent of them disagreed while 5.5 percent of them strongly disagreed to the statement. The statement had mean score of  $M=2.93$  which is an implication that the respondents on average respondents agreed that interviews avoided the chances of biased recruitment with standard deviation of 1.68 which is an implication of variation from this mean.

Table 4.1; the respondents were further asked whether assessment of the appropriate employee was done through competitive process. The distribution of the responses indicated that 0.9 percent strongly agreed to the statement, 52.7 percent of them agreed, 18.2 percent of them were neutral while 6.4 percent and 21.8 percent of them disagreed strongly and disagreed to the statement respectively. On average as implied by the mean of  $M=4.36$ , the respondents agreed that assessment of the appropriate employee was done through competitive process with standard deviation of  $SD=0.9$  which is an implication of variation from this mean.

Table 4.1; the respondents were lastly asked whether during assessment background check was carried out. The distribution of the responses indicated that 4.9 percent strongly agreed to the statement, 48.7 percent of them agreed, 15.3 percent of them were neutral while 12.5 percent and 19.6 percent of them disagreed strongly and disagreed to the statement respectively. On average as indicated by mean score  $M=3.64$  the respondents agreed that during assessment background check was carried out. A standard deviation of  $SD=0.95$  which is an implication of variation from this mean.

The findings agree with Njoroge and Nzulwa (2021) who describe recruitment as process of attracting a large pool of qualified applicants for employment. Recruitment practice involves development of job description, job analysis and advertisement this attracts individuals to the organization. Another study concurs with the findings is that of Njoroge, Kihoro and Kosgei (2020) who informs critical recruitment practice to included screening, sorting, testing, interviews and checking references, this enables the identification of individuals who match organization values. The finding concurs with Nderitu and Makhamara (2021) explained importance of recruitment; help the recruiter to identify individuals who have the abilities required to meet organizational demands, thus employee commitment. The findings are in line with Armstrong (2019) explained recruitment to include identify and soliciting individuals within and outside with the aim of onboarding them to the organization.

#### **4.2. Employee Commitment in Selected County Governments in Kenya**

The findings are presented in a five-point Likert scale where SA=strongly agree, A=agree, NAD=neither agree nor disagree, D=disagree, and SD=strongly disagree. The results as shown in table 4.14 were presented in form of percentages, mean and standard deviations as measure of central tendency and measure of dispersion.



**Table 4.2: Employee Commitment in Selected County Governments in Kenya**

Statements on Employee Commitment		SA	A	NAD	D	SD	M	SD
Employees are likely to spend the rest of their careers with county government	%	43.0	42.0	14.0	1.0	0.0	2.90	1.87
Employees are emotionally attached to county jobs	%	27.0	56.0	13.0	3.0	1.0	2.57	1.65
Employees are not likely to jump the current job to another	%	31.0	50.0	18.0	0.0	1.0	3.21	1.99
One of the reasons for not leaving county job is scarcity of alternatives	%	39.0	38.0	21.0	2.0	0	2.24	.83
Even though it may be advantage to leave, employees feel it would not be the right time to leave	%	31	49.0	17.0	2.0	1.0	2.82	1.80
Employees are not leaving their jobs now since they have obligation to the people in the County	%	32.0	47.0	18.0	2.0	1.0	2.15	1.93
Employees are committed to their jobs because of certain values such as seniority, benefits, authority and power	%	29.0	47.0	20.0	3.0	1.0	2.32	1.83

From table 4.2, the respondents were asked whether employees are likely to spend the rest of their careers with county government. The distribution of findings showed that 43.0 percent of the respondents strongly agreed, 42.0 percent of them agreed, 14.0 percent of the respondents were neutral while 1.0 percent disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed to the statement. The statement had a mean score of M=2.90 which is an implication that respondents on average respondents strongly agreed that employees are likely to spend the rest of their careers with county government. A standard deviation of SD=1.87 is an implication of variation from mean response.

The respondents were also asked whether employees are emotionally attached to county jobs. From table 4.2, the distribution of the responses indicated that 27.0 percent strongly agreed to the statement, 56.0 percent of them agreed and 13.0 percent of them were neutral while 3.0 percent of them disagreed. 1.0 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed to the statement. On average as implied by the mean of M=2.57 respondents agreed that employees are emotionally attached to county jobs. A standard deviation of SD=1.65 showed variation from the mean response.

The respondents were also asked whether employees are not likely to jump the current job to another. From table 4.2 the distribution of the responses indicated that 31.0 percent strongly agreed, 50.0 percent of them agreed, 18.0 percent of them were neutral while 0.0 and 1.0 percent of them disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement respectively. The mean response was found to be M=3.21 revealed that on average respondents agreed that employees' are not likely to jump the current job to another. The standard deviation of SD=1.99 shows that there are variation from the average response.

The respondents were further asked whether one of the reasons for not leaving county job is scarcity of alternatives. From table 4.2, the distribution of the responses indicated that 39.0 percent strongly agreed, 38.0 percent of them agreed while 21.0 percent of them were neutral. 2.0 percent of the respondents disagreed while none strongly disagreed to the statement. The mean response was found to be M=2.24 which shows that on average, the respondents strongly agreed that one of the reasons for not leaving county jobs was scarcity of alternatives. The standard deviation of SD=1.83 shows that there are variations from the average response.

The respondents were also asked whether even though it may be advantage to leave; employees feel it would not be the right time to leave. From table 4.14, the distribution of the responses indicated that 31.0 percent strongly agreed to the statement, 49.0 percent of them agreed while 17.0 percent of them were neutral. 2.0 percent of the

respondents disagreed and 1.0 percent strongly disagreed to the statement. The mean response was found to be  $M=2.82$  which shows that on average, the respondents agreed that even though it may be advantage to leave; employees feel it would not be the right time to leave. The standard deviation of  $SD=1.80$  shows that there are variations from the average mean response.

Further, the respondents were asked whether employees are not leaving their jobs now since they have obligation to the people in the County. From table 4.14, the distribution of the responses indicated that 32.0 percent strongly agreed to the statement, 47.0 percent of them agreed while 18.0 percent of them were neutral. 2.0 of the respondents disagreed while 1.0 strongly disagreed to the statement. The mean value was found to be  $M=2.15$  which showed that on average the respondents agreed that employees are not leaving their jobs now since they have obligation to the people in the County. The standard deviation of  $SD=1.93$  shows there are variation from average response.

Finally, respondents were further asked whether employees are committed to their jobs because of certain values such as seniority, benefits, authority and power. Table 4.2, the distribution of the responses indicated that 29.0 percent strongly agreed to the statement, 47.0 percent of them agreed while 20.0 percent of them were neutral. 3.0 percent of the respondents disagreed while 1.0 strongly disagreed to the statement. The mean value was found to be  $M=2.32$  showing that on average, respondents agreed that employees are committed to their jobs because of certain values such as seniority, benefits, authority and power. The standard deviation of  $SD=1.83$  showing variations from average mean response.

The findings are consistent with Theresa and Vijayabanu (2016), who stated that affective commitment is achieved when an employee feel like their personal values and priorities are in line with the company mission. The findings are in agreement with the previous study of Tugel and Kilic (2021), who asserted that an emotional attachment that employees have with their organization was as a result of congruent goals and values. Continuance commitment binds the employee with the organization. With normative commitment employees perceive that they are obliged to continue to work for the organization. The findings concur with Armstrong (2019) suggests that employees with commitment influences customer satisfaction, implementation of new ideas as well as achievement of goals.

#### **4.3 Inferential Results**

Inferential statistics are a set of methods used to make generalization estimate, prediction or decision. In statistics, statistical inference is the process of drawing conclusions from data that are subject to random variation. Inferential statistics was used to test hypotheses and make estimations using sample data. Thus, inferential statistics was used to make inferences from data to more general conditions. In this study inferential analysis was conducted through correlation and regression analysis to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables

#### **4.9 Correlation Results**

Correlation study's the strength of relationship and associated between dependent variable, and one or more independent variables (Collis & Hussey 2013). In this study Pearson's correlation ( $r$ ) was used, value of  $r=0$ , shows absence of correlation, correlation value of  $r$ =negative show negative correlation, while correlation value of  $r$ =positive showed positive correlation. The rule of thumb for interpreting the result was correlation value of  $r = 0.1$  to  $0.3$  indicate weak correlation, correlation value of  $r = 0.31$  to  $0.5$  indicate moderate correlation, while correlation value of  $r = 0.51$  and above indicated strong correlation between variables.

**Table 4.3: Correlation Matrix**

			Employee Commitment	Recruitment Practice
Employee Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Recruitment Practice	Pearson Correlation	.565**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	341	341	

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

The results in table 4.3 showed that there was a positive and significant correlation between recruitment practice and employee commitment ( $r=0.565$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ). The positive coefficient of correlation value implied that there was a strong positive relationship. Further this means that both recruitment practice and employee commitment move in the same direction. As such a unit increase in recruitment practice is accompanied by an increase in employee commitment in the selected county governments in Kenya. The result of the study corroborates with the findings of Kidagisa and Mukanzi (2021) whose results revealed strong and positive association between recruitment and employee performance. Similarly, the findings are in line with Mugambi, Fridah and Omuya (2023) who noted a complex recruitment process used to increase the chance of hiring people with the right skills, which match organizational requirements.

#### 4.4 Regression Results

Linear regression focuses on determining relationship between one independent (explanatory variable) variable and the dependent variable. Regression comes handy mainly in situation where the relationship between two features is not obvious. Regression analysis is a type of statistical evaluation that enables three things; firstly, description of relationships between the dependent variable and the independent variables; secondly estimation of the value of the dependent variable from the observed values of the independent variable and finally, prognostication/prediction of risks factors that influence the outcome and individual prognoses can be determined (Cooper & Schindler 2014). This section provides regression results on recruitment practice, remuneration practice on employee commitment.

#### 4.5 Univariate Regression Analyses

In this study univariate regression was conducted to measure the ability of independent variable to predict outcome of dependent variable in a linear relationship. In this study coefficient of determination R square, F test statistics, beta ( $\beta$ ) coefficient and t test were generated. R square is the coefficient of determination which measured the variation in dependent variable explained by independent variable. Analysis of Variance generated F-test statistics, which explained the good fit of model data fitted and significance of the overall model at five percent significance level. Beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) explained how unit change in individual independent variable affected unit change in dependent variable. As such a unit increase or decrease in independent variable resulted to unit increase or decrease in dependent variable and t test indicated the level of significance of independent variable to the dependent variable at five percent significance level, this was used to either reject or not reject the null hypothesis of the study.

#### 4.5.1 Univariate Regression; Recruitment Practice and Employee commitment in Selected County Governments in Kenya

**Table 4.4: Regression Model; Recruitment Practice and Employee Commitment**

a Dependent variable: Employee Commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.408	.248		5.670	.000
	Recruitment practice	.646	.056	.563	11.547	.000
	R Squared	.317				
	Adjusted R Squared	.315				
	F statistic	133.341				
	P value	.000				

The study sought to determine the effect of recruitment practice on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The univariate regression analysis indicated the values for coefficient of determination (R square), ANOVA by F statistics test, t test and beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for recruitment practice and employee commitment. The regression results in table 4.4 indicates the coefficient of determination R-Square=.317. This model revealed that recruitment practice explained 31.7 per cent variation of the total change in employee commitment in the selected county governments in Kenya. The remaining 68.3percent variation in employee commitment was explained by other variables which were not included in the model.

The Analysis of Variance was performed to establish the significance of independent variable and dependent variable. The results in table 4.4 indicated F test statistic =133.341, p value=0.00<0.05. This revealed that the relationship between recruitment practice and employee commitment in the selected county government in Kenya was statistically significant. Further in determining the significance of independent variable on dependent variable the critical t values should be more than 1.96 p values <0.05. The results in table 4.4 indicated training practice t value 11.547 >1.96 p value 0.00<0.05 was within the range and therefore recruitment practice was significant predictor of employee commitment in the selected county governments in Kenya.

Also the results in table 4.4 indicated beta coefficient  $\beta$ =.646, p value 0.000<0.05. This model indicated statistical significance of recruitment practice and employee commitment. The model indicates that recruitment practice, when held to a constant zero; employee commitment would be 1.408. Further, it was determined that a unit change in recruitment practice would cause an increase in employee commitment by a factor of 0.646 units. The estimated model was as shown;

$$Y = 1.408 + 0.646X_2$$

Where; Y- employee commitment;

$X_2$ -recruitment practice.

The findings of the current study are in line with Njoroge, Nzulwa and Kwena (2021) who found recruitment to have direct impact on how long employee stayed in organization. Further the study established that whatever happens during recruitment determined the willingness to work, stay, and leave the organization, suggested that recruitment practice explained normative, continuance and employee affective commitments. Similarly the findings agree with Aden and Muya (2024) recruitment phases which organizations use to increase the chances of hiring committed employee. The phases ensured that there is a large pool of applicants; screening and interviews carried out, this determined commitment fit of the applicant.

#### 4.5 Multiple Regression Results without Moderation

Multivariate regression was conducted to measure the ability of independent variables to predict outcome of dependent variable in a linear relationship. R square was the coefficient of determination which measured the variation in dependent variable explained by independent variables. Analysis of Variance generated F-test statistics, which explained the good fit of model data fitted and significance of the overall model at 0.05, significance level. Beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) explained how unit change in independent variables affected unit change in dependent variable. As such a unit increase or decrease in independent variables resulted to relative change in dependent variable and t test indicated the level of significance of independent variables on the dependent variable as long as the t values are more than 1.96 at 0.05, significance level. This was used to either reject or

not reject the null hypotheses of the study.

**Table 4.5: Regression Model; recruitment Practices and Employee Commitment**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.859	.251		3.416	.001
	Recruitment practice	.337	.073	.285	4.503	.000
	R Squared	.426				
	Adj. R Squared	.417				
	F statistic	52.597				
	P value	.000				

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

The multiple regression results obtained in table 4.5 showed the amount of variation on the dependent variable explained by independent variables. The multiple regression analysis for the relationship between the variables yielded the coefficient of determination R square 0.426. This meant that 42.6 per cent of the corresponding change on employee commitment in the selected county governments in Kenya can be explained by recruitment practice and performance management practice). The remaining 57.4 per cent of variation in employee commitment was explained by other variables not included in the model.

The Analysis of Variance results are shown by F test in table 4.5. It consist variability within a regression model and this formed a basis of significance at 0.5. The findings indicated statistical significance of the overall model. This was supported by F statistics 52.597 p value 0.00<0.5. This led to the conclusion that recruitment practice was statically significant predictors of employee commitment in the selected county government in Kenya.

In determining how useful the independent variables could be then t values should be more than 1.96 p values<0.05. As such the results in table 4.5 indicate recruitment practice t- values: t=4.503>1.96 p value 0.000<0.05 was within the range and therefore the variables were found to be significant predictors' on employee commitment in the selected county government in Kenya. Furthermore, findings in table 4.5 showed the beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) used to explain unit change in dependent variable as a result of independent variables at 0.05, level of significance. The results indicated significance of recruitment practice  $\beta= 0.337$  p value 0.000<0.05. The model showed that remuneration practice combined when held to constant zero employee commitment would be 0.859 and there would be change in employee commitment by factor of 0.337, caused by unit change in recruitment practice respectively. Estimated multiple linear regression models without the moderator are therefore given as;

$$Y = 0.859 + 0.337X_2$$

Where; Y= Employee commitment,

$X_2$ = Recruitment Practice,

#### 4.6 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis testing was determined by t values gauged by critical values and significance levels at 0.05. The decision to reject or not to reject was that if the calculated t statistics were higher than the critical t statistics (1.96) p value <0.05, the null would rejection and if less than 1.96 p>0.05 then null hypothesis would be accepted. The first null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) predicted that recruitment practice has no significant effect on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The findings in table 4.6 indicated t value 11.547 >1.96 p value 0.00<0.05. This indicated rejection of the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative. Therefore, it was concluded that recruitment practice has a significant effect on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya.



**Table 4.6: Hypothesis Testing Results**

	Hypothesis	t-Values/ P value	Decision
H <sub>02</sub>	Recruitment practice has no significance effect on employee commitment in selected counties in Kenya.	11.547 > 1.96 p 0.000 < 0.5	Reject

#### 4.15 Optimal Model and Revised Conceptual Framework

The optimal model revealed the variables that were included in the final hypothesized variables of the study. The results of moderated regression model and employee commitment best explained this model. The summary of the findings are presented in table 4.7

**Table 4.7: Optimal Model**

Variable	$\beta_2$ , P value	Decision Rule
Recruitment practice	0.629, 0.026 < 0.05	Accept

The findings in table 4.6 were used to either accept or reject inclusion of a variable in the optimal model. When moderated the construct recruitment practice had  $\beta_2=0.629$  and p values. Therefore they had positive and significant effect on employee commitment leading to their acceptance and subsequent inclusion in the final optimal model. While the optimal model is therefore illustrated as;

$$Y=6.413+0.629X_2Z$$

Where; Y= Employee commitment,

X<sub>2</sub>= Recruitment practice,

#### 5.0. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings noted complex recruitment process used so as to increase the chance of hiring people with right skills, which match individual ability and organization requirement. The human resources that organizations get depend on recruitment process. The study sought to evaluate the effect of recruitment practice on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The findings indicated that employee screening in county was based on merit as it provides relevant information about jobs and that during screening applicant resume is required for further scrutiny. These findings implied that interviews avoid chances of bias recruitment as such improper interviews would lead to legal action against organizations and selection of appropriate employee in county was done through competitive process. At the assessment process skills relevant to the job are evaluated. The finding also was positive that during final assessment for the job, background check is carried out as successful applicants for the job are interrogated by the management.

The study generally concluded that recruitment practice significantly has effect on employee commitment in the selected county government in Kenya. From the findings it can be inferred that the indicators (screening, interview, and assessment) of recruitment practice significantly affects employee commitment in the selected county government in Kenya. Basing on the prediction that recruitment practice has no significant effect on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya; the study concluded by rejection of the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative. Therefore, the study concluded that recruitment practice had positive and significant relationship with employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya.

The county governments should recruit basing on merit and provide relevant information about jobs and that during screening applicant resume should be required for further scrutiny. They should follow recruitment process thus screening, interviews and assessments to avoid chances of bias recruitment. Improper recruitment process should be avoided at all cost as this would lead to legal action. Selection of appropriate employee in county should be done through competitive recruitment. The study recommends that county governments should recruit qualified employees, this would bring on board developed and skillful employees. The county government should recruit employees based on person job fit to identify employee overall commitment, and use of tools that predict commitment in potential recruits.

The study recommended a framework policy which emphasizes merit in recruitment; the study recommended

policy design that call for further screening to ascertain the level of accomplishment. The study recommends policy designed against biased interviews, this would avoid the organization engagement on legal actions. The study recommends recruitment policy designed on person job fit based on recruitment tools that predict employee commitment.

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