

## Emotional Social – Awareness And Commitment Of The Public Sector Employees In Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

*Emotional intelligence is currently gaining attention in the human resource management circles as a management tool. The management of employees' emotions positively and significantly affects the employees' commitment. The public sector in Kenya has a challenge with employee commitment yet a committed work force is very critical to the realization and actualization of the 2030 Vision. This study sought to assess the influence of emotional social-awareness on public sector employees' commitment in Makueni, Murang'a and Uasin Gishu Counties, Kenya. The study reviewed, Coleman emotional Quotient theory on emotional intelligence and employee commitment. The study adopted descriptive survey design for data collections and analysis. Stratified random sampling technique to draw a sample size of 206 respondents from the target population of 20600 public sector employees. A total of 206 BEIS-10 emotional intelligence scale Questionnaires were used as data collection instruments. A pilot study using 13 Questionnaires was carried out for validity and reliability testing. Descriptive data was analyzed in frequencies and percentages, and means, standard deviation. In the descriptive analysis, the frequencies and percentages was used to provide sets of values and to express how these values relate to the larger group of respondents the means were used to measure the central tendency of the values, while the standard deviation was used to measure the dispersion of the values around the means. Inferential statistical analysis was used to show the cause-effect among the variables. Linear regression analysis was applied. Chi-square f –test was used for hypotheses testing. The findings were presented in tables and figures. The findings indicated that the p-value for each independent variable coefficient indicates that, emotional social-awareness have no significant positive influence on the employee commitment of the Public Sector in Kenya since its p-values are greater than the level of significance,*

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, Emotional social- awareness, Employee commitment, Public sector employees.

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### **I. Introduction**

Emotional intelligence has become a popular topic since the publication of a bestseller by Goleman, (Goleman ,2024).Although the construct of emotional intelligence is not new ,it's application in the workplace has begun at rather frenzied pace during the past decades ( Bar-On, 2023).The precursors of these efforts extend past the second- world war era with extensive studies conducted by U.S.A office of personnel management and the work of David Mac Clelland at Harvard University that focused on the importance of emotionally and socially intelligent behaviour among managers (Bar-On, 2023).

The term “Emotional intelligence” was formally presented by Salovey and Mayer such as emotional intelligence needs to encompass three criteria in order to be regarded as true intelligence (Mayer et al., 2023). These criteria are; conceptual meaning that is, this intelligence can be described as asset of abilities. Correlation meaning that is the intelligence measures correlate with other measures which reflect similar skills and abilities. Developmental meaning, that it is the intelligence develops with age and experience but only up to some point (Mayer, 2020). Initially Salovey and Mayer defined emotional intelligence as a subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions, (Salovey & Mayer, 2023) . Mayer, Salovey and Caruso from U.K. later added that emotional intelligence includes the ability to perceive, appraise, and express emotions accurately, the ability to understand emotional knowledge, the ability to access and generate feelings where they facilitate cognitive activities and additive actions, and the ability to regulate emotions in oneself and others (Meyer, Salovey & Caruso, 2023).

Studies conducted in many parts of the globe in the recent past, indicate that emotional intelligence is emerging as a soft skill related to employee commitment. Emotional intelligence being referred to as the abilities concerning recognition and regulation of emotions in self and others and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Gillioz et al., 2023).

At the regional level from Africa, Nikhaslat and Hojab, (2022) from Cairo Egypt states that employee loyalty is closely related to the extent to which an employee views himself/herself attached to the organization. How employees feel about their work is important to commitment to the organization (Nikhasat & Hojab, 2022).

At the local level, Nzomo and Kathungu, (2023) from Kenya states that, emotional intelligence can enhance the organizational outcomes of the Public sector employees .This is in a study that explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees in Public sector Organizations in Kenya ,( Nzomo & Kathungu,2023).

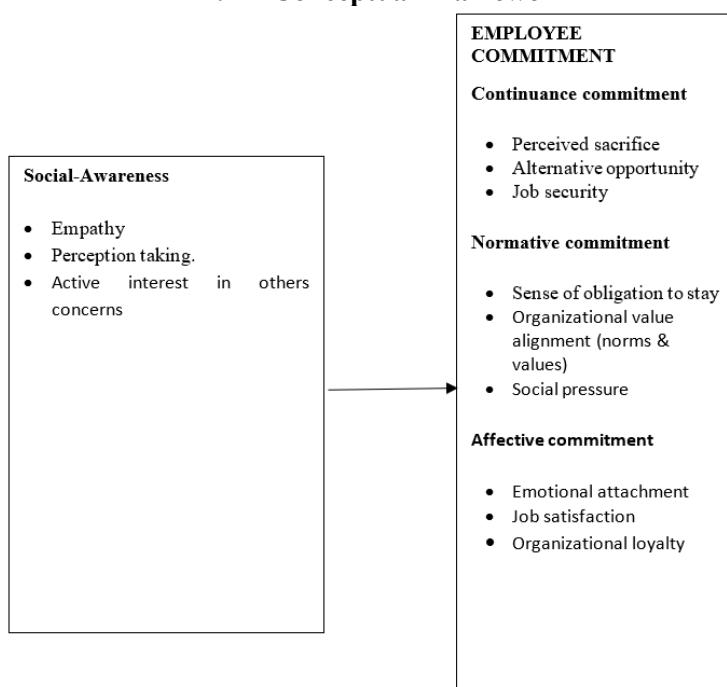
#### Social- Awareness

Emotional social- awareness means understanding other peoples' feelings (empathy) and it involves sensing others' feelings, perspectives and taking an active interest in their concerns (Salovey & Mayer, 2023). It also means sensing others development needs and bolstering their abilities and at the same time anticipating, recognizing and meeting the customer needs through service orientation. Using emotional awareness, one is able to leverage diversity by cultivating opportunities through different kinds of people. Emotional social - awareness has three major emotional components that help in conflict management at the workplace namely; political awareness, communication and empathy (Goleman, 2020).

Emotional empathy includes the ability to understand and to appreciate the feelings of others and involves the ability to establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships that are characterized by intimacy and by giving and receiving affection. Emotional empathy is demonstrated by cooperation and contribution of one as a constructive member of a social group (Bar- On, 2022). Inter-personal connection enables leaders to establish and sustain network with people to whom caring and appreciation can be expressed; and to whom vulnerabilities and hopes can be shared (Kleef & Cote, 2017). Social- awareness also includes political awareness which from an emotional awareness point of view, political awareness means the ability to read a group's emotional currents and power relationships. A leader's success dependence on this aspect of emotional intelligence as it will determine the action to take. Organizational politics can be very destructive but with careful conflict management tactics they can be brought under control (Coleman, 2018).

After understanding the emotions of the people, one should listen openly and then send convincing message that shows he or she cares. The communication should focus on trust, honesty, and integrity at the same time, there should be emotional intentionality that is saying what is meant and meaning what is said. This means that the confidence level of the listeners is raised or reduced by the words of their leaders, (Kaynak, 2020). At the workplace social awareness when well understood helps organizations to provide

## II. Conceptual Framework



### Social-Awareness and Employee Commitment

According to Smith and Clarke, (2023) social-awareness is the competency of empathy which is the ability to read non-verbal cues for negative emotions mostly anger and fear to judge the trustworthiness of others. Gardener, (2022) explains social awareness as understanding of others feelings and not experiencing them. Social awareness in big organizations is at times neglected, due to heavy workloads and therefore lack of suitable platforms that allow one to construct and convey one's identity. Social awareness is at times referred to as contextualized cognizance Caruso, (2023). Employees need this understanding in order to build up their creativity to influence their work commitment and performance.

Valentine, (2024) concluded that social awareness has significant positive influence on employee and was supported by Muriuki and Gachunga whose studies concluded that social awareness correlates positively with organizational commitment (Muriuki & Gachunga, 2022). Sarboland, (2024) indicated that social awareness played a moderate role in employee commitment while, Antony (2022) indicated that Social awareness played a significant role in employee commitment. However, Mahamadkhan and Lalardi, (2024) concluded that there was no relation between social-awareness and employee commitment. Like Antony, Hacioglu indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between Social-awareness and employee commitment (Hacioglu, 2022). Social awareness has positive influence on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and customer service (Taghrid, Sufan Ayman & Abdullah, 2024). Employees are able to become more relevant with increasing availability of commitment when it is an element of self-esteem as a mediator factor (Ebrahim, 2024).

### III. Methodology

**Study Design:** Descriptive Survey research design that combined both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis as it sought to establish the relationship between emotional social –awareness and the public sector employees' commitment in Kenya.

**Study location:** Murang'a, County, Makueni County and Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

**Study Duration:** 2022 April – December 2022.

**Sample size:** 206 Public sector employees

#### Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study employed stratified random sampling method, to sample the respondents. Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller groups (strata). In stratified random sampling or stratification the strata are formed based on members shared attributes or characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2023). There are many formulas of calculating the sample size but, the researcher has chosen to use the already prepared tables by an expert research advisor Fall, (1984) with the "rule of thumb" on sample size emphasize the distribution provided in the table 3.2. The formula has been used recently by other researchers like (Kohn & Senyak, 2024).

**Table 3.2:** Sampling Procedure

Size of population	Procedure
0-100	100%
101-1000	10%
1001-5000	5%
5001-10000	3%
A bove10000	1%

According to the above table the sample size for the study will be 206 respondents as the target population fall in the category of above 10000 that requires calculation using 1% ( $20600/100 \times 1 = 206$ ).

#### Sample Size of the study

**Table 3.3:** Sample Size of the Study

County	No. of Respondents	% of N
Uasin Gishu	66	32%
Murang'a	76	37%
Makueni	64	31%
Total	206	100%

#### Data collection procedure

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the university to enable her get a research authorization letter from the relevant authorities. The 206 questionnaires were then administered by the researcher assisted by research assistants that had been given some brief training. Two weeks were allocated for the distribution of the questionnaires and the collection of the same. The duly filled questionnaires were handed over for analysis and interpretation of the data.

#### Statistical Analysis

Qualitative analysis of the study was carried out on both the independent variables and dependent variables using content analysis method.

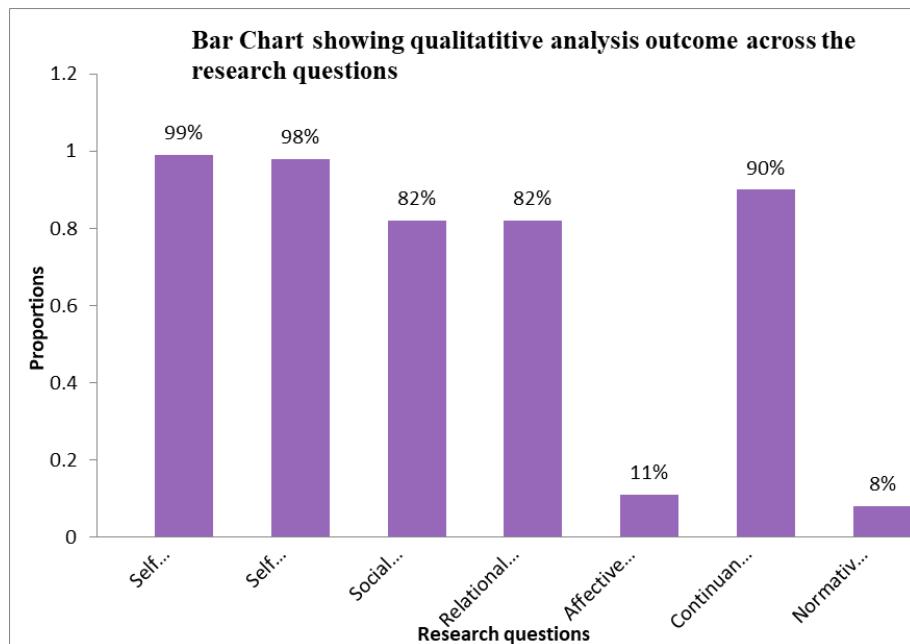


Figure 4.4. Qualitative Findings –social awareness

On Social-awareness, 82% of the respondents indicated that they could fairly assess the emotions their workmates were going through while 18% indicated that it was difficult for them to identify the emotions their workmates were experiencing. The respondents indicated that they could identify emotions in their workmates through their changed behavior, their speech, (sudden spells of rudeness), withdrawal from social activities, work performance and interest in various activities. Results on the main research question; the influence of social awareness on commitment of public sector employees. As indicated by the summated scales, majority of the respondents totally agreed that social awareness has a direct impact on the commitment of public sector employees which are represented by 25.9% having strongly agreed and 28.7% agreed. 20.9% of the respondents were uncertain about the research question while 14.8% and 9.6% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that social awareness does not affect the commitment of public sector employees.

#### Regression analysis results

Multiple regression was conducted to determine the relationship between dependent and independence variables where the Employee commitment was the dependent variable while the independent variables were Self-awareness, Social-awareness, Self-management, and Relational management. The multiple regression result for the model summary is displayed in the table below.

Table. 4.26: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std error of the estimate	Change statistics					Dubbins Watson
					R Square change	Fchange	Df1	Df2	Sig. F change	
1	.371 <sup>a</sup>	.128	.116	.53304	.138	6.424	4	161	.000	1.694

Predictors: (Constant), Relational-Management, Social-Awareness, Self-Awareness, Self-Management

Dependent variable: Employee-Commitment-Centered

The regression model summary shows that the regression model is significant  $F(4, 161) = 0.000 < 0.05$ . The coefficient of determination for the model is, 0.138 which shows that 13.8% of variance in dependent variables is explained by the independent variables (emotional intelligences). Even though this value as a goodness of fit indicator is quite low, Coefficient of determination is not an absolute indicator of goodness of regression fit because it does not explain the causation relationship between the dependent and independent variables and also the correctness of the regression model is not explained by r-squared and thus it's not a conclusive indicator of model fitness (Statistic solution, 2024) and thus should be used with other tests such as F-test as earlier stated. The Dubbin Watson test statistic is 1.679 which depicts there are instances of positive autocorrelation in the data as this value is close to 2.0

*Table 4.30: Linear Regression Coefficient*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std error				Tolerance	VIF	
<b>1</b>	(Constant)	2.395	.312		.7678	.000		
	Social-Awareness	-.048	-.048	-.071	-.868	.387	.802	1.247

a. Dependent variable: Employee-Commitment

Social awareness negatively influences the employee commitment (dependent variable)

The p-value for each independent variable coefficient indicates that Emotional social-awareness ( $\beta = -0.071$ ,  $Pv = 0.387$ ) has no significant positive influence on the employee commitment since its p-value are greater than the level of significance (0.05).

From the regression model, holding each independent variable constant at a time Social awareness has a decreasing effect on the employee commitment of -0.071.

#### **Hypotheses Findings Conclusion**

Social - awareness has no significant influence on the public sector employees' commitment in Kenya.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

**On social awareness policies** on empathy and diversity training should be made mandatory for all public sector employees, focusing on understanding and valuing different perspectives Included in the modules should be active listening, cultural competence, and inclusive behavior. Community Engagement Initiatives that encourage employees to participate in community engagement activities to better understand the needs and emotions of the communities they serve should be initiated in order to provide opportunities for volunteering and community service as part of employee development. There should be the establishment of clear channels for open and honest communication, including regular feedback sessions and town hall meetings. Create mechanisms for employees to share their experiences and insights on social awareness issues.

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