

Effect of Promotion Strategies on the Organizational Commitment of Banking Sector Employees in Kenya

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Abstract: This study sought to assess the effect of promotion practices on the employee commitment in the banking industry in Kenya. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire from employees in different commercial banks. Correlation results reveal that Promotion has a weak relationship with commitment at $r = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$, at the 0.01 level of significance. Further analysis revealed that promotion has a negative and significant relationship with commitment (Beta = -0.022, at $p > 0.05$). The study divided the target population into two groups, those on contract and permanent employees. The results indicate that promotion had a significant relationship with commitment for contract ($p=0.000$) while for permanent employees, there was no significant relationship ($p=0.443$). The study concludes that, there is need to improve the promotion criteria and the benefits that employees receive on promotion. Further, there is need to base promotion on merit in order to motivate employees' performance and productivity. HR managers: need to be more involved in the promotion evaluation process to remove the subjectivity in the process.

Keywords: HR practices, Promotion, Organizational Commitment, Banking sector employees

I. Introduction

Increasingly organizations are interested to develop committed workforce to reduce employee turnover and absenteeism (1), while improving the employees' performance and job-related attitudes. There is also growing evidence that employees' positive attitudes and discretionary behaviours are important factors affecting organizational performance (2)(3). Hence, gaining a better understanding of the motivational basis for such work attitudes and behaviours is regarded as an important component of research agendas relating to management practice(4).

Human Resource Management (HRM) has made a transition from a state of insignificance to one of strategic importance academically and business wise (5). As firms are entering into a more dynamic world of international business and as the globalization of world markets continues apace, comparative human resource management issues appear to be gaining momentum. Human resource management practices are central to improve the quality of services offered by organizations. In the words of Huselid and Becker (6), having good human resource management practices is likely to generate much loyalty, commitment or willingness to expend extra effort to attain the organizations objectives.

Several scholars have noted that managing people is more difficult than managing technology or capital. However those firms that have learnt how to manage their human resources well would have an edge over others for a long time to come because acquiring and deploying human resources effectively is cumbersome and takes much longer (7)(8). The effective management of the human resource requires sound HRM practices. These practices have been defined as distinctive approaches to employment management which seeks to obtain competitive advantage through the deployment of a highly committed and skilled workforce, using an array of techniques (9).

The current disposition of HRM is largely associated with the drastic expansion of businesses globally, technological innovations and fierce competition that characterizes the environment in which businesses operate today and the Kenyan business environment is no exception to this global development. Kenya has recently developed into one of the fastest growing economies on the African continent and is gradually developing into the financial hub of East Africa. It is therefore a step in the right direction to view HRM practices in the Kenyan competitive commercial banking sector and how they impact employee's commitment and thus the organizational performance.

Considering that previous researchers do not agree on the HRM practices, policies and systems employed, and accordingly the constructs developed, the results derived from these studies are not comparable. Serious gaps also still remain with respect to the causal ordering of the variables involved in the HRM –

commitment relationship. Without a clearly delineated theoretical model of High Commitment Human Resource (HCHR) practices, and their effects on the performance of commercial banks in Kenya, scholars cannot adequately validate the efficacy of such practices, let alone provide useful suggestions to practitioners. While some investigations have been initiated in emerging markets and in transitional countries (10), the available literature highlights that most of the studies examining the relationship between HRM and organization's commitment have been conducted in the manufacturing sector mostly in the United States (11) (12)(13), and others in the Asian and Arab countries relating to the banking sector (14)(15), few studies have been done in Kenya particularly in the banking sector.

This research aimed at investigating the role played by Human Resource Management Practices in enhancing the commitment of the employees in the commercial banking sector in Kenya. This study will investigate the link between the promotion practices and employee commitment in Kenyan commercial banks.

1.2 Hypothesis

H₀: Promotion practices do not have a significantly influence on the commitment of banking sector employees in Kenya.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

There are various frameworks for analyzing employment relationships and commitment in different organizations. In an attempt to explain the relationship as per level of commitment, the Human Resource Attribution theory was used.

2.1.1 Human resource attribution theory

Research study shows that HRM practices are associated with organizational performance through their influences on employee attitude and behaviour(16) and employee perceptions of HRM(17). Based on this suggestion, Nishii, Lepak & Schneider (18) and Kelly (19) have come up with the construct HR attributions theory. The theme of the HR attribution says the attributions that employees develop about the intentions of management adopting particular HR practices have consequences for their individual attitudes and behaviours, and ultimately, unit performance, (20). Nishii et al. (18)(2008) examine five main HRM practices including staffing, training, benefits, pay, and performance appraisals and identify employees attribute these HRM practices to (i) enhance (service) quality; (ii) keep costs down; (iii) promote employee well-being; (iv) get the most work out of them; and (v) comply with union requirements. Employee attribution to HRM practices as management intention to promote employee service quality and well-being is positively related to HRM practices and employee attitude and behaviour relationship. On the other hand, employee attribution to HRM practices as management policies to minimize costs and to exploit employees is negatively related to HRM practices and employee attitude and behavior relationship. However, employee attribution to HRM practices as management conformity to the pressure of union is not significantly related to their attitude and behavior. Nishii et al. (18) confirm their assumptions by testing the theory in a service organization. The authors find that employees have developed varying attributions for the same HRM practices and that these attributions generate different level of employee commitment and satisfaction. In turn, individual attribution is shared within units and consequently it affects unit-level OCB and employee commitment to the organizations performance and goals.

2.2 Human Resource Management Practices

HRM practices have been defined in many ways .for instance, it has been defined as organizational activities that are directed at managing the pool of human resources and ensuring that resources are employed towards the fulfilment of organizational goals(21). Neal & Patterson (22) conceptualized HRM practices as a set of internally consistent policies and practices designed and implemented to ensure that a firm's human capital contribute to the achievement of its business objectives. Similarly, Nasurdin et al, (23) viewed HRM practices as an individual's perceptions of the extent of implementation of the strategies, plans, and programs used to attract, motivate, develop, reward and retain the best (23)people to meet organizational goals. Building on the arguments given by these scholars, HRM practices comprise of specific practices, formal policies, and philosophies that are designed to attract, develop, motivate and retain employees who ensure the effective functioning and survival of the organization.

According to Hussain & Ahmad (24), theoretical research shows that HRM practices are not standardized and as such researchers tend to select a set of HRM practices depending on the theoretical perspective used. The HRM practices adopted for this study were thus promotion opportunities and performance evaluation.

2.3 HRM practices and organizational commitment

Meyer & Allen (25) have stated that some of the Human resource management practices are linked with commitment. Even though a lot of research studies empirically strived to illustrate the relationship (26)(27), the concept that how these practices influence commitment is yet to explore. It is asserted that the elucidation of the HRM practices by means of the employees would influence their level of commitment.

Studies have also shown that managers, who want to improve efficiency and efficiency of their organizations, ensure that personnel investment is maximum, (25).

2.4 Promotion opportunities and Organizational Commitment

Monetary compensation is important, but not sufficient, to keep employees. Non-monetary recognition plays the same role as compensation does. Praise, appreciation, and positive feedback from managers and peers for a job well done is imperative to generate job satisfaction and commitment (28). Recognition is needed in the social and organizational environment as a motivational tool to bring about a good work outcome. In high professional jobs, recognition is considered as a main objective to maintaining the feeling of high involvement and being an important element of the organization (29)(30) confirmed that recognition is positively related to continuance and affective commitment of employees.

On the basis of above mentioned literature and arguments it can be safely assumed that promotion practices are correlated with the commitment of employees. This relationship needed to be tested in the commercial banking sector in Kenya.

III. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This was a survey research design. A survey design was appropriate for this study because it allows collection of information for both independent and dependent variables using questionnaires (31). This design allowed the researcher to combine both qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

3.2 Population

The target population in this study was the forty three commercial banks in Kenya which had been given operational License by the Central bank of Kenya. The study population for this study was the heads of human resources in the individual commercial banks in Kenya. Due to manageability of the population, the researcher selected the six top commercial banks based on branches. Thus commercial banks with at least 50 branches were selected in the study.

3.3 Data Collection

The research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of both open- ended and closed-ended type of questions. The closed ended questions were aimed at giving precise information hence minimizing bias. The open ended questions ensured that the respondents were given freedom to express themselves. The questionnaire was to measure attitudes of employees towards promotion and commitment. Most of the questions were likert type for the variables of the study, combined with open ended questions. Secondary data was collected through review of published literature such as the various bank publications, central bank of Kenya reports and publications and text books. The questionnaires were then delivered by the researcher with the help of the two research assistants to the respondents. The respondents were given a maximum of two weeks to fill them after which the questionnaires were collected.

3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

In this study data were managed and analysed using Statistical package for social science (SPSS) A total of 360 questionnaires were distributed and 311 were returned, accounting for 86% response rate. All the received questionnaires were referenced and items in the questionnaire coded to make data entry easy.

Descriptive statistics were estimated for the various variables. Frequency tables and graphs were made for all the variables. The data reliability was checked using the Cronbach's alpha index. Inferential data analysis was done using Pearson correlation coefficient, regression analysis (enter method) and multiple regression analysis. The correlation was used to determine the direction of the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between the various human resource practices and employee retention.

Hypothesis testing using p value was done because it gave the strength of the decision. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (32) a significance level of 0.05 is recommended as it represents that results are at 95% confidence level. The statistical models to be used for analysis was multiple regression (enter method).

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where Y is the dependent variable employee commitment

B_0 is the constant
 B_1 is the coefficient of X_1
 X_1 is Promotion Opportunities
 ϵ is the error term

IV. Findings

4.1 Reliability Test

The Cronbach's Alpha values for all the indicators before and after extraction with a factor loadings value of less than 0.4 is presented. Cronbach's Alpha results in the first column were computed using results of all the indicators and the Cronbach's Alpha results in the last column were computed after the reduction of indicators/factors with factor loadings of less than 0.4. The Table 1 presents that all the seven factors had Cronbach's alpha value of 0.723 and factor loading between 0.783 and 0.242. This rule led to the elimination of the factor with .242 while all the others had a loading had a loading of more than 0.40. The Cronbach's alpha value after this changed to 0.719 with one factor eliminated. The Cronbach's Alpha value of more than 0.7 implied that the gathered data was reliable and therefore could be used for generalization.

Table 1: Factor analysis and reliability of promotion Opportunities

Cronbach's Alpha Before	Indicators	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha After
.723	i will get the first priority for promotion	.783	.719
	the targets set for promotion are realistic	.717	
	i am given the opportunity to attend workshops, seminars and conferences to expand my knowledge	.242	
	the organization has a written and operational promotion policy	.491	
	seniority in positions is considered during promotions	.413	
	promotion criteria is on merit only	.603	
	promotion policy in this organization is written and operational	.724	

4.2 Promotion practices

From the study results, 54% (168) of the respondents felt that the existence of promotion opportunities in the organization enhances employee commitment. A significant percentage (50%) disagreed that the targets set for promotion were realistic. Only 24% agreed to this and the rest were neutral.

On average, 48% of the respondents disagreed that the promotion criteria was based on merit, and 27% of them are neutral on this. At the same time, 52% disagreed that should an opportunity for promotion arise, they would get first priority. These finding are consistent with Ngethe (2013) and Obwongi (2011). When asked whether promotion opportunities in the organization affected their overall commitment, a significant percentage 68% agreed. Further analysis showed that those employees who were union members were not particularly interested in promotion beyond a certain level. The main reason 67% gave for this was that beyond this level, they cease to be union member as per the law and thus loose the union annual increment.

Since the study included 2 commercial banks where employees were not union members, 26% responded that promotion affects their commitment. The study revealed that while the increments from the union were guaranteed annually, those from the management were based on performance, which was in most cases not based on merit. This is contrary to what was shown by research by Lamba and Choudhary (33), promotion tends to increase commitment. Promotion can be made on different criteria's like seniority, merit etc. In this study however, the results show that with promotion, employees' commitment reduces.

Table 2: Promotion practices

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
i will get the first priority for promotion	34.7	17.4	26.7	15.1	6.1
the targets set for promotion are realistic	30.9	19.6	24.8	16.4	8.4
i am given the opportunity to attend workshops, seminars and conferences to expand my knowledge	17.4	24.1	24.4	20.3	13.8
the organization has a written and operational promotion policy	20.6	15.4	29.3	21.9	12.9
seniority in positions is considered during promotions	19.0	18.3	29.6	18.0	14.8
promotion criteria is on merit only	29.3	19.0	27.0	19.3	5.1
promotion policy in this organization is written and operational	16.4	12.9	23.2	23.2	24.4

4.3 Employee Commitment

The study sought to measure employee commitment in terms of effort commitment, value commitment and retention commitment.

1. Perception of Effort Commitment

On average, 65% of the respondents indicated that they are willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help the organization to be successful. A significant percentage, 57% also indicated that they talk about the organization to friends as a great place to work, see Table 3.

Table 3: Effort Commitment of Employees

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful	8.4	7.7	19.3	29.7	35.0
I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for	3.9	17.7	22.5	27.3	29.6
I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization	20.9	16.4	27.7	20.3	15.1

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neither agree nor disagree, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

2. Perception of Value Commitment

Majority of the respondents (52%) indicated that they find their values and those of the organization are very similar. A substantial percentage (60%) indicated that they were proud to tell others that they are part of the organization. Though substantial, only 44% felt that the organization inspires the very best in them in the way of job performance, and 34% neither agreed nor disagreed, (see Table 4)

Table 4: Value Commitment of Employees

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar	9.0	13.2	26.0	32.5	19.3
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization	5.5	8.4	26.7	28.3	31.2
This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance	10.0	12.9	33.4	28.9	14.8

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neither agree nor disagree, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

3. Perception of Retention Commitment

When asked about their perception on what happens to the organization, a significant percentage (59%) of the respondents felt that it really matters to them at the rate of 51-75%. A significant percentage (51%) also

agreed with the view that they are glad they chose to work for their current organization. In other words, they did not mind staying with the organization indefinitely (see Table 5)

Table 5: Retention Commitment of Employees

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for, over others I was considering at the time I joined	6.8	13.5	28.9	28.9	21.9
I really care about what happens to this organization	7.7	9.3	23.8	33.1	26.0
For me this is the best of all possible companies for which to work	10.9	19.9	30.5	23.5	15.1

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neither agree nor disagree, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

When asked to rate their perception on the level of employee commitment, a significant percentage, 42.12%, of the respondents believed that it was between 51-75%. As seen in Figure 1 below, only a minimal percentage, 10.93% believed it was between 1-25%.

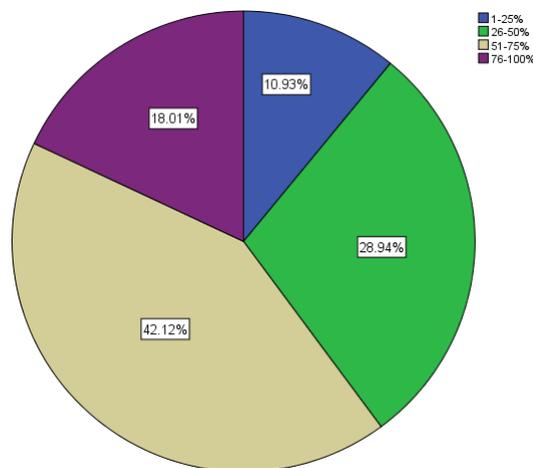


Figure 1: Level of Employee Commitment

When asked about their opinion on the overall effect of the stated HRM practices in enhancing their commitment as banking sector employees, a significant percent (18.01%) gave the rate of 51-75%, and a further 42.12% gave the rate at 76 -100%. This gives a combined 60.12%, indicating that they identify with the bundle of HRM practices.

4.4 Whether Promotion Practices Influenced Employee Commitment

The study sought to determine the extent to which the promotion practices in the banking sector influenced employee commitment. The findings in Figure 2 show that only a small percentage of the respondents 12% indicated that the promotion practices affected their commitment to a very large extent. The findings further show that 19% the respondents indicated that it influenced to a large extent. From the findings of the study, it was evident that though most of the organizations practiced promotion practices, the criteria used was not merit based and thus tended to be subjective. The findings agree with the views of Gibbs (34) Larkin (35) that organizations that follow ladder promotion based on appraisal by supervisors do invariably tend to discriminate amongst employees.

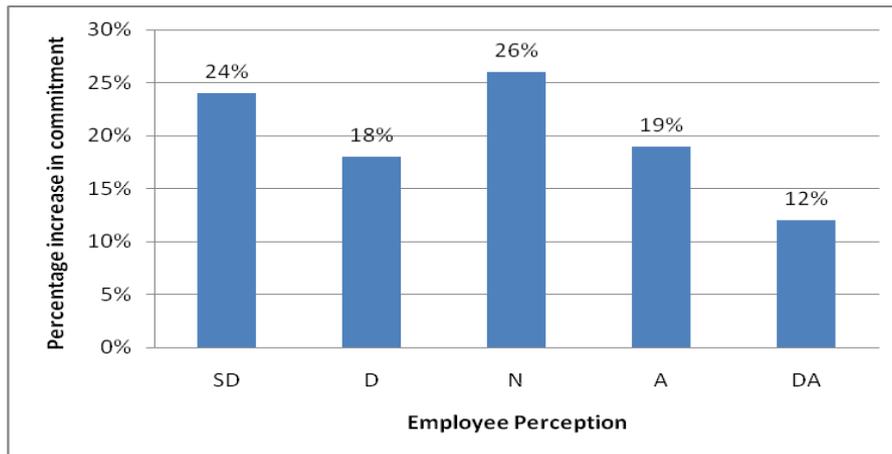


Figure 2: Relation between Promotion and Commitment

4.5 Description Statistics for On-Contract and Permanent Employees

The study was divided into two strata of permanent and on contract employees. A one way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there is any statistically significant difference between the means of the on-contract and permanent employees in the Kenyan banking sector. Table 6 below shows the descriptive statistics of the responses

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for On-Contract and Permanent Employees

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Promotion	on contract	98	3.06	.764	.077
	permanent	212	2.65	.782	.054
	Total	310	2.78	.798	.045
Employee Commitment	on contract	98	3.48	.903	.091
	permanent	213	3.40	.878	.060
	Total	311	3.43	.885	.050

From Table 6 above, we find that for promotion practices, on a scale of 1 to 5, on-contract employee fall on a 3.06 mean (Neutral), while permanent employees fall on the 2.65 mean, which shows they are dissatisfied with the promotion practices. On the other hand, for employee commitment, the results show that the two groups have a close to identical mean (3.48 for on-contract and 3.40 for permanent). This shows that both groups are more or less neutral about their perception on organizational commitment.

From the ANOVA results shown in Table 7 below, we can see that the significance level is 0.000 ($p=0.000$), which is below the 0.05 and therefore, there is a statistically significant difference between the means of on-contract and permanent employees in the Kenyan banking sector when it comes to promotion practices. However, when it comes to employee commitment, the results are 0.443 ($p=0.443$), which means that there is no statistically significance difference between the means of on-contract and permanent employees' commitment

Table 7: One Way ANOVA for On-Contract and Permanent Employees

		Sig.
Promotion	Between Groups	.000
	Within Groups	
	Total	
Employee Commitment	Between Groups	.443
	Within Groups	
	Total	

4.6 Correlation Analysis

The study conducted correlation analysis to test the strength of association/relationship between the research variables. The findings of the study in Table 8 show that there is a positive relationship between promotion practices and employee retention with a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of $r = .291$ and at level of significance of 0.000, was statistically significant as the p-value is less than 0.01. The relationship can be described as not strong.

Table 8: Correlations Analysis

		Employee Commitment	Employee Promotion
Employee Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	.291**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	311	310
Employee Promotion	Pearson Correlation	.291**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	310	310

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

4.7 Regression Analysis

The researcher conducted a regression analysis to determine the significance relationship of promotion practices against the employee commitment. The results in Table 9 show that the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.082 which means that only 8.2% of the variance in employee commitment in the banking organizations is explained by promotion practices. This though positive is a weak representation and therefore means there are equally other factors which determine employee commitment in the banking sector.

Table 9: Model Summary For Employee Promotion Practices ^a

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.291 ^a	.085	.082	7.618

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Promotion

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

The analysis of variance in Table 10 below shows that the significance of the F is 0.00 which is less than 0.05. This implies that the regression model is statistically a significant predictor of the outcome variable.

Table 10: ANOVA ^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1655.157	1	1655.157	28.520	.000 ^b
	Residual	17874.662	308	58.035		
	Total	19529.819	309			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Promotion

The beta coefficients of promotion practices verses the employee commitment results in Table 11 showed that there was significant relationship between the promotion practices and the employee commitment. The overall model was found to be significant, $F(1,308) = 28.5$, $p > 0.001$, and accounted for 29.1% of the variance. The results indicate that promotion practices were significant predictors of employee commitment commitment was positive since the coefficient of strategic performance management is 0.385 which is significantly greater than zero. The t statistics is also significant and thus the promotion does actually explain employee commitment. This demonstrated that the employee promotion practices had a positive influence on the commitment of employees in the organization. Since the significance value of 0.000 which is less than the p-value of 0.05, the study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between employee promotion practices and employee commitment in commercial banks in Kenya. The null hypothesis that employee promotion practices do not significantly influence commitment of employees in the commercial banking sector in Kenya is therefore rejected.

Table 11: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	23.368	1.472		15.870	.000		
	Employee Promotion	.385	.072	.291	5.340	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that for the commercial banking sector, both promotion and commitment do not have a strong relationship. The study also reveals that as employees move from on-contract to permanent, their level of commitment tends to be neutral. The results indicate that, when it comes to promotion practices, most of the employees who are on contract look forward to being made permanent. On the other hand, those who are permanent have little interest in promotion to a higher grade. The study therefore concluded that the promotion practices had little or no influence on the organization commitment of employees in the commercial banking sector in Kenya.

VI. Recommendations And Further Research

The study recommended that the management of commercial banks should employ less subjective ways in setting targets, performance measurements performance review and giving incentive to employees in the promotion practices in order to enhance employee commitment in this sector.

It is suggested that future studies on organizational commitment should be carried out to find out the link between union membership and commitment of employees in the Kenyan banking sector.

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