

## Training as a Determinant of Employee Commitment: A Survey of KTDA Tea Factories in Kenya.

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the determinants of employee commitment in tea organizations in Kenya. Observations among 54 enlisted KTDA tea factories in Kenya show high disparity in average payment of tea deliveries (bonus) over a three year period 2009 to 2012. According to Tiampati (2012) strong employee commitment is correlated with high productivity, while low commitment lowers productivity. The primary objective of this research was to determine the influence of training aspects on employee commitment in tea factories in Kenya. To achieve this objective a survey was conducted to canvas the opinions of respondents in public KTDA tea factories in Kenya. Purposive sampling was employed to select six (6) factories based on second payment known as bonus; with three (3) high paying and three (3) low paying. Stratified sampling technique was used to categorize population into managers and employees. Random sampling was used to give the sample size of employees. A total of 273 respondents were randomly selected from a population frame of 861 employees. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected by use of self-administered structured questionnaires and interview schedule. Analysis of data showed low paying factories had a lower average mean in all aspects of training 46.25% compared to high paying at average mean 76.34%. Further analysis using Spearman's rank correlation test revealed significant relationship ( $P=0.00<0.01$ ) between training and commitment. It was recommended that training needs should be conducted periodically so as to organize specific training programmes for improving skills, competence and built employee commitment.). The findings of this study will help management with intervention strategies to put in place human resource practices like training that enhance employee commitment to increase efficiency and productivity for better financial gains.

**Key words:** Training, Employees, Commitment, Organization, Enlisted factories

### 1. 0.Introduction

No organization in today's competitive world can perform at peak levels unless each employee is committed to the organizations' objectives and works as an effective team member. The appointment of good workers is critical but of greater significance is the organizations ability to create a committed workforce. According to Ogunjinmi et al (2013), every individual within an organization is important to the fulfillment of organizational goals and objectives, consequently employee's commitment plays a significant role in the effectiveness and stability of organizations. In the past organizations secured the loyalty of their employees by guaranteeing job security. However many organizations have responded to competitive pressures by downsizing, restructuring and casualization, thus creating a less secure environment and broken employment psychological contract. To realize the critical importance of people in the organization is to recognize that human element and the organization are synonymous (Yaser, 2012). A growing number of employees feel they are victims of broken promises. One of the challenges facing modern organizations involves maintaining employee commitment in the current competitive pressures.

With no assurance of continued employment, employees have now raised their expectations in other areas. For instance employees expect employers to demonstrate their commitment in terms of pleasant working environment such as affiliation and having access to training for growth (Coetzee, 2005). As organizations are faced with increasing competition and new challenges, one of the key components of survival is maintaining and upgrading the human resource skills and competencies which ultimately lead to organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Training has been identified as contributing greatly to the organizational competitiveness. From

managements view point training is regarded as a means of engaging the commitment of employees to organization (Heye and Stuart, 1996 cited in Soltani and Liao, 2010; Bartlett, 2001). Bragg, (2002) argue that companies with committed employees will outperform companies with uncommitted workforce, and contents that demonstrating commitment to employees will generate a reciprocal commitment. Committed employees do better work than uncommitted and organizations with committed employees do better financially than the others. Employers need to determine what is responsible for this disparity. Organizational effectiveness depends on more than maintaining a stable workforce; employees must perform assigned duties dependably and be willing to engage in activities beyond role requirements.

It thus seems that employees' willingness to contribute to organization effectiveness will be influenced by their level of commitment (Vance, 2006). Training is of growing importance to companies seeking to gain an advantage among competitors as a tool that leads to higher commitment and retention. Owens, (2006) stressed the vitals of training for continual updating and improvement, identifying one source of human motivation at work as intrinsic motivation: the desire to grow; learn, and to develop oneself. Cherrington (1995) also stated that most learning situations are fundamentally reinforcing because of the satisfaction and commitment associated with the acquiring new knowledge or skills. Training has influence on company finances and research has shown that, committed employees are found in organizations that do well financially (atsd.com, 2005). Links between provisions of training and improvements in organizational commitment have been established, positive relationship between training perceptions and affective organizational commitment has also been found (Al-Emadi and Marquardt, 2007; Ahmad and Abubakar, 2003, Bartlett, 2001).

Lawson et al (2003) argue that barriers to elicit employee commitment to organization arise from lack of training to update job performance skills and encourage a sense of belonging, thus lowering efficiency and reduced productivity. This view supports Bartlett, (2001) cited in Brum (2007) study found that training was a current investment that may offer a greater pay off at a later date through reciprocity. Since employee commitment is likely to be influenced by aspects of training, this research was aimed at providing tea organizations with a practical approach to enhance employee commitment and improve productivity.

#### **Problem statement**

Training is of growing importance to companies in the world over that are seeking to gain an advantage among competitors as a tool for enhancing higher employee commitment and retention (Owens, 2006). The American Society for Training and Development found that in 2004, the average annual training expenditure per employee was \$955, which was an increase of \$135 per employee from the previous year. The number of formal learning hours per employee also rose from 26 hours in 2003, to 32 hours in 2004 (atsd.com, 2005). Previous empirical studies have provided extensive evidence that training facilitate updating of skills, and lead to increased commitment, well-being, and sense of belonging, thus directly strengthening the organization's competitiveness (Acton et al, 2000). According to Lawson et al (2003) barriers to elicit employee commitment arise from lack of effective training to update job performance skills and encourage a sense of belonging, thus lowering efficiency and reduced productivity. According to Brum, (2007) although training can positively impact commitment, general training is not enough, but the relevancy to their current jobs plays a role in establishing more positive employee commitment outcomes. However employee commitment has been affected by the competitive business environment. Employees have become victims of broken promises arising from downsizing, restructuring and casualization, thus creating a challenge for the organizations to maintain a committed workforce with no assurance of continued employment (Coetzee, 2005). Rashid et al (2003) says high levels of commitment are evident in organizations that are doing well financially.

Braggs (2002) argue that companies that do well financially outperform others and have committed employees, yet fewer than half the employees in today's workforce are committed to their employer. Employers need to determine what is responsible for this disparity. Observations from 54 enlisted KTDA factories in Kenya show high disparity in average payment of tea deliveries (bonus) over a 3 year period (2009 to 2012). This is evidenced between six (6) selected factories from different Counties. The disparity of average payments (high and low) in KTDA tea organizations has been attributed to different levels of employee commitment (Silverthorne, 2004; Cohen, 2007; Tiampati, 2012). Empirical literature showed that little had been done to establish the determinants of employee commitment in KTDA tea factories. According to Chen, (2013) organizational commitment is expected to be influenced by a series of elements which include training. The higher the organization commitment among employees, the more responsible an individual is to the organization. This study was therefore undertaken to determine the influence of training aspects on employee commitment in KTDA tea factories in Kenya.

### **1.1. Research objective**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the influence of training on employee commitment: A survey of KTDA tea factories in Kenya. In order to achieve these objective, different aspects of training were identified namely: Training for new skills, availability of resources for training, continuous training, training to acquire competence and training policy.

### **2.0. Literature review**

Based on social exchange theory training increase commitment as a way of reciprocation, while investment theory notes training is an investment that was based on individuals perception of their investment in organization; age, length of service, accumulation of credits and likelihood of finding suitable position in some other organization. Thus the length of service in organization or seniority should be positively related to the growth of investments and reduced mobility (Meyer et al, 2004).The study was also guided by Herzberg's two-factor theory (cited in Armstrong, 2009). The basic tenets of the two-factor theory provide insight into areas managers or employers can influence in order to increase the satisfaction of their employees and thus gain commitment and loyalty to organization.

Commitment is two-way activity. If employers want committed employees, they need to be committed employers. Committed employees do better work than uncommitted ones and organizations with committed employees do better financially, yet fewer than half the employees in today's workforce are committed to their employer. Employers need to determine what is responsible for this disparity. According to Ogunjinmi et al (2013), every individual within an organization is important to the fulfillment of organizational goals and objectives, consequently employee's commitment plays a significant role in the effectiveness and stability of organizations. With no assurance of continued employment in the current competitive work environment, employees have raised their expectations in areas like a pleasant working environment with affiliation and access to training (Coetzee, 2005). According to Poh, (2001) training is the process of providing employees with specific skills, and helping correct deficiencies in their performance. Dockel, (2003) argues that investment in training is one way to show employees how important they are. This view supports Herzberg (1959) theory cited in Armstrong, (2009) who identified advancement opportunities as motivators. The theory notes that by offering training opportunities employees will feel the organization is investing in them and that there are opportunities for growth in the organization hence give meaning to the current job.

Lawson et al (2003) argued that barriers to elicit employee commitment to organization arise from lack of training to update job performance skills and encourage a sense of belonging, thus lowering efficiency and reduced productivity. This view supports (Bartlett, 2001) study who found that training was a current investment that may offer a greater pay off at a later date through reciprocity. The findings also found that increased investment on the part of the employee ties them closer to the organization without which they are not inclined to stay. Frazis and Spletzer, (2005) studied training for social identity and found that training helps employees identify with the organization while new and current employees acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs, thus enhancing commitment to the organization.

Karia et al (2000) cited in Boon, (2006) studied the importance of training for continual updating and improvement in Malaysia and found that employees view training as a gift and strive to repay (reciprocate) by increasing commitment to their organization. Further empirical studies have provided extensive evidence to support this, that training facilitate the updating of skills, and lead to increased commitment (Ahmad, and Abubakar 2003; Acton and Golden, 2000). A study by Aon Consulting in Canada in 2000 cited in Coetzee (2005), on effectiveness of various organizational practices in building employee commitment identified five key areas namely, safety and culture ,rewards, affiliation, growth and work-life/harmony. However areas that motivated employees more was training. Results indicated that 60% of employees reported their co-workers improved their skills to make better contribution to the organization, and 78% were satisfied with the training provided on the job (Madigan and Dorell, 2000).

Bartlett (2001) cited in Brum,(2007) studied the association between employee attitudes towards training, and feelings of organizational commitment, with a sample of 337 registered nurses from five hospitals in Malaysia, using social exchange theory as a model for examining the relationship. The findings found that perceived access to training, social impact of training, motivation to learn, and perceived benefits of training are positively related to organizational commitment. This supports the views of Groen, (2006) who asserted that fostering an environment where participation in training programs are encouraged and linked to overall human resource strategy can have a significant impact on employee's level of commitment and improve efficiency and productivity in organization. Organization commitment occupies an important position that cannot be neglected, hence becomes necessary to explore determinants of organizational commitment (Chen, 2013).

### 3.0. Research methodology

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design. This design was appropriate since it provided a snapshot of the variables in the study at one point in time thus providing objective information across all departments. According to Meijen, (2007), it reveals how variables under study are represented in a cross-section of a population

#### 3.1. Sampling techniques and sample size

**Table 1: Sample frame and sample size**

Selected factories	Population	Sample Size
Imenti	137	43
Iriani	109	35
Nyansiongo	133	42
Mogogosiek	192	61
Kapkatet	193	61
Chebut	97	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>273</b>

The target population of this study was from the six (6) selected tea factories from the various Counties of the tea growing and processing areas in Kenya. They are viewed as representatives of the 54 enlisted tea factories for two main reasons: First a stratification of all high paying and low paying factories resulted in a choice of three(3) from high and three (3) from low paying factories that were purposively selected. Secondly conditions prevailing are the same for factories of similar categories. Respondents were taken from all departments, namely factory operations, finance, technicians and field operations. This helped to collect information across all sections. The sample for the study was obtained from the total population of 861 using Slovens' formula for finite populations (Yara et al, 2012). This gave 273 respondents or 31.7%, which was well above the acceptable sample. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) a representative sample is at least 10% to 20% of the study population. Stratified sampling technique was used to categories employees into management and non-management. Six (6) managers one from each factory were interviewed.

#### 3.2. Research instruments

This comprised a self-administered questionnaire for employees and interview schedule for management. Information on employees' attitudes was solicited using questions of likert-type scale containing 5 response alternatives. Namely Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Somehow (S), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) these questions were rated 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The weight of 5 was allocated to the response that was hypothesized to have the most positive influence on employee commitment to organization while 1 was allocated to the most negative.

In order to determine the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable another set of 5 response alternatives were used, Namely Very High (VH), High (H), Medium (M) Low (L), and Very Low (VL). These were also rated 5,4,3,2 and 1 where the weight of 5 was allocated to the variable with the most influence while 1 was allocated to the variable deemed to have the least influence. Further two questions were put forward to find out whether the employees were committed to their organization in form of "NO" or "YES", and another to rate their level of commitment as very low, low, moderate, high and very high. Likert-scale was used in this study since it was more reliable, and objective (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

### 4.0. Research findings

#### 4.1. Biographic information

The first part of the questionnaire deals with biographic information of the respondents and the information that follows was obtained. Filled 200 questionnaires were received which constituted 76.9 % response rate. Descriptive statistics applied showed that the sampled employees who responded in the selected tea factories comprised n=140 which translate to 70 % male and n= 60 translating to 30% female, table 2.

**Table 1: Cross tabulation: Gender of respondents**

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	140	70
Female	60	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The sample indicated that 39 % of the respondents accounted for age group under 30 years, 47.1% between 30-

39 years, 11.9% 40-49 years and only 1.9% were of the age 50 years and above. 5.2% of the respondents had education of primary and below, 49% had secondary education while 45.8% had tertiary education. Further analysis showed 53.8% respondents had been in the organization for 4 years and below, while 46.2% had spent 5 years and above in their organization. The descriptive statistics also showed that the respondents comprised 33.8% factory workers, 11.9% were from finance department, 30% were technicians while 24.3% were field operators, table 3.

Table 2: Cross tabulation table: Biographical information

Descriptions	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
under 30	80	39
30-39	94	47.1
40-49	24	11.9
50&above	4	1.9
<b>Qualification</b>		
Primary and below	10	5.2
Secondary	101	49
Tertiary	95	45.7
<b>Length of stay</b>		
less than 2 years	72	34.3
2-4 years	41	19.5
5-6 years	46	22.4
More than 6 years	50	23.8
<b>Department</b>		
Factory	71	33.8
Financial	25	11.9
Technical	62	30
Field operators	51	24.3
Total	200	100

#### 4.1.1. Training

Section b of the questionnaire contained questions to capture the respondents' attitudes on different aspects of training, namely training to gain new skills to handle work tasks provision of resources for training, opportunities to learn, grow and advance, training to gain competence to handle job properly and policy for education and training as part of life activities in their organization. Descriptive statistical analysis gave the information shown on table 4.

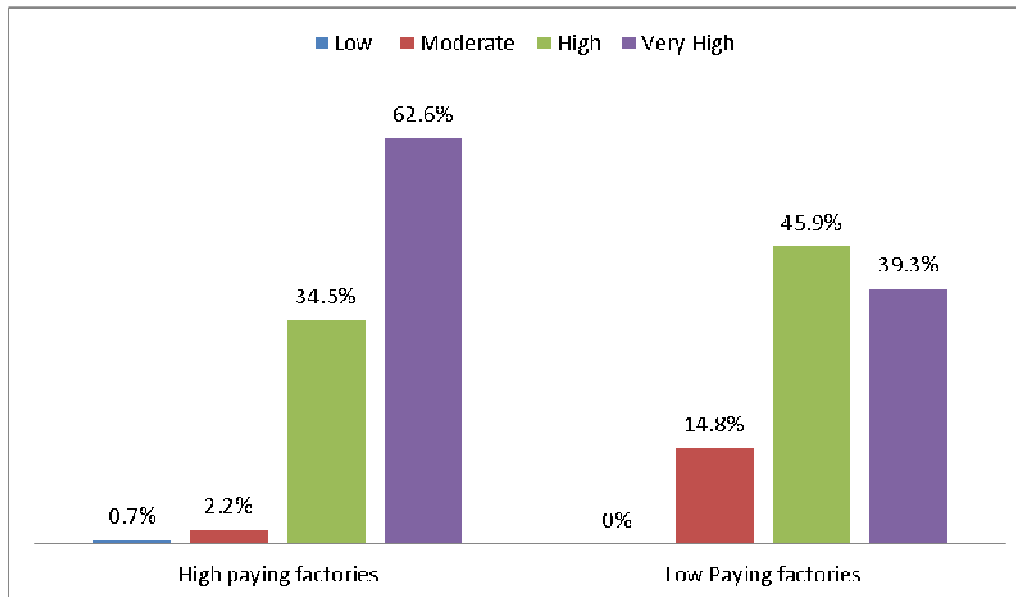
**Table 3: Employee response on provision of different aspects of training**

Table 4. Below was generated showing how commitment levels differed between high paying and low paying factories with respect to training. Result from the table indicates that out of a total of 200 respondents surveyed, 139 came from high paying factories and 61 from low paying factories. About 63% (87) of the respondents from high paying factories stated that training influenced their level of commitment. The influence was high for 48 respondents (35%). Only 2.2% or 3 members would be influenced moderately and lastly less than 1% (1) stating low influence. Those from low paying factories were distributed as follows; very high (39%) or 24 responders, high 28 or 46%, 15% (9) moderate and none said low from the 61 participants.

**Table 4. Influence of training on commitment cross-tabulation by company/factory**

	To what Level would training influence your commitment				Total
	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	
High paying factories					
% within factory	0.7%	2.2%	34.5%	62.6%	100.0%
low paying factories					
% within factory	.0%	14.8%	45.9%	39.3%	100.0%
Total					
% within factory	.5%	6.0%	38.0%	55.5%	100.0%





**Figure 1. Influence of training on employee commitment in different factories.**

To establish whether training of employees were independent of employee commitment to organization, a null hypothesis was generated and tested using Spearman's rank correlation.

$H_o$  : Training is not significantly related to employee commitment in KTDA tea factories in Kenya.

To test this hypothesis respondent were asked if they would be committed to the organization if certain aspects of training were provided. The results were analysed as shown on table 5.

The correlation matrix obtained from Spearman's rank correlation showed significant results. The result showed that training for new skills, ( $r = 0.555$   $p < 0.01$ ), Training resources ( $r = 0.550$   $p < 0.01$ ), continuous training ( $r = 0.431$   $p < 0.01$ ), Acquisition of competence ( $r = 0.443$   $p < 0.01$ ) while training policy was also significant at ( $r = 0.383$   $p < 0.01$ ).

This analysis further revealed significant relationship ( $p = 0.00 < 0.01$ ) between training and commitment hence the hypothesis:  $H_o$ : Training is not significantly related to employee commitment in KTDA tea factories in Kenya was rejected. This means training is significantly related to employee commitment in KTDA tea factories.

#### 4.1.2 Discussion of results

The study sought to find out the influence of training aspects on employee commitment in tea organizations. Data analysis was conducted by use of descriptive statistics which showed that majority of the respondents were male, however the one third government policy had been observed by the organizations by having 70% male against 30 % female. Analysis showed that a large majority of the respondents 86.1% were of age 39 years and below, while only 13.8% were aged 40 years and above this meant the organizations had a fairly young workforce which has the characteristics of being energetic and innovative but less stable and may show high turnover in such of better alternatives. This concurs with (Meyer et al, 2004) who argued that investment plans alone is insufficient to produce organization commitment among employees with medium lengths of service. Analysis showed the respondents were from various departments which gave objective view of the issues in the factories.

Findings revealed that training for new skills contributes to employee commitment. This is consistent with the findings of (Frazis and Spletzer, 2005) who found that training to acquire skills to perform job enhances commitment. Provision of resources for training was found to have a significant contribution to employee commitment. These results were consistent with Brum (2007) who argued that training was a current resource investment which may offer a greater pay off in future through employee reciprocation.

**Table 4: Spearman's (rho) Correlations matrix for different aspects of training**  
**Correlations**

		Are you committed to this organization?	Trainig Q4	Trainig Q5
Spearman's rho	How has provision of the following committed you to this organization?	Correlation	1.000	.443**
		Coefficient		.383**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
Training for new skills		N	200	210
		Correlation	.555**	.371**
		Coefficient		.254**
Resources		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	200	210
		Correlation	.550**	.235**
Continuous Training		Coefficient		.135
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001
		N	200	210
Acquire Competence		Correlation	.431**	.266**
		Coefficient		.253**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
Training Policy		N	200	210
		Correlation	.443**	.284**
		Coefficient		.284**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	200	210
		Correlation	.383**	.284**
		Coefficient		1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	200	210

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

Results on further aspects of training continuous training and acquisition of competence and training policy all showed significant relationship, and that providing employees with regular training and the right type enables employees to do the right thing at the right time ,thereby increasing their productivity and efficiency which ultimately leads to their commitment (Soltani and Liao,2010; Ahmad and A bubakar,2003).This results are consistent with those of (Groen,2006) asserting that fostering an environment where participation in training programs are encouraged and linked to overall human resource strategy can have a significant impact on employee's level of commitment and improve efficiency and productivity in organization.

Further analysis revealed that low paying factories showed lower mean in all training aspects 46.25 % compared to high paying 76.34 %. Analysis using spearman test revealed significant relationship ( $p=0.00 < 0.01$ ) between training and commitment. The results suggest that part of the disparity in payment among KTDA tea factories is contributed by training aspects. This view is held by (Lawson et al, 2003) who argued that barriers to elicit employee commitment arise from lack of effective training programmes. Hence training programmes should be well-planned and effective to enhance high levels of commitment.

Abraham Maslow's (1954) theory of needs (cited in Armstrong, 2009) asserts that effective training programs caters for esteem needs as well as actualization which commits employees to organizational goals. Furthermore Braggs, (2002) companies with committed employees outperform those with uncommitted workforce, and contents that demonstrating commitment to employees through various training programmes will generate a reciprocal commitment by increased commitment and contribution to the organization. This supports the findings that high paying KTDA tea factories rated highly for all aspects of training provided in the organizations

## 5. Conclusion

The study sought to find out the influence of training aspects on employee commitment in KTDA tea factories in Kenya. The study has implications for management of tea factories since, all aspects of training showed significant relationship to commitment; this means part of the disparity observed in payment of tea bonus (high and low) in various KTDA tea factories in Kenya is contributed by ineffective training programmes. Employment psychological contract has been broken by downsizing, restructuring and casualization and employees expect employers to demonstrate their commitment in terms of pleasant working environment where there is access to training. This can enhance commitment and productivity because employees view training as an investment. It is evident that the problem of employee commitment in KTDA tea factories will continue to bring disparity in average bonus payment unless attention is given to the area of training. Organizations with committed employees outperform others with uncommitted ones; furthermore demonstrating commitment to employees will generate a reciprocal commitment by increasing effort and contribution to the organization.

### 5.1. Recommendation

Based on the results of the study management of KTDA factories should conduct training needs periodically so as to organize specific training programmes for improving skills, competence and employee commitment. This would provide solutions to organizations faced with low productivity problems by giving special attention to training in their organizations human resource practices for building commitment.

Training programmes should be pegged to performance in order to increase productivity apart from motivation.

### 5.2. Suggestions for further study

- i. A similar study can be conducted in service organizations to determine if the results will be consistent.
- ii. Further study should be done to determine the nature and strength of association between age, gender, tenure of service and commitment for employees in the tea companies in Kenya.
- iii. Other studies should test training in relation to different types of commitments like; affective, normative and instrumental commitment in the tea organizations.

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