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# Gender, Emotional Intelligence and Employee Commitment in Savings and Credit Co-Operative Societies in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties, Kenya

**Samuel Muchuku Matheri**
Ph. D. Student, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya
**Kabare Karanja**
Senior lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya
**G. S. Namusonge**
Professor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

*Abstract:*
*The concept of emotional intelligence is becoming popular with more studies being carried out with research overwhelmingly showing that up to 90 per cent of one's performance effectiveness was due to emotional savvy rather than technological knowledge. It is also believed that emotional intelligence allows the person other ways of being and behaving as compared to those emphasized by traditional ideas of intelligence. It is thus possible for the person to develop these alternative ways of being in order to become more effective and efficient in both day-to-day living and in the workplace. Studies looking at the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and critical organizational outcomes suggest that the Emotional Intelligence of employees is an important and practical aspect of organizations. This study presents an overview of the concept of Emotional Intelligence with regard to gender and employee commitment. The study focused in Employees in Kenyan Savings and Credit Co-operative (SACCO) in Kenya with results showing that when combined, all the four main variables of emotional intelligence contributes to 54.5% of employee commitment in males and statistically no influence on females.*

*Keywords: Emotional intelligence, employee commitment, gender, Sacco*

## 1. Concept of Employee Commitment

Becker et al. (1996), defined employee commitment as the psychological attachment of worker to their workplaces. According to Mayer et al. (1998), there is a positive relationship between employee commitment and job performance. Employees who are more committed to an organization are more likely to remain in an organization and exert more effort on behalf of the organization and work towards its success hence improving its performance than the less committed employees. Peccei and Rose (as cited by Franke et al., 2008) describe commitments to quality as the relative propensity of a service employee to engage in continuous improvements and exert effort on the job for the benefit of customers. Customers desire relatedness, assurance, empathy and reliability and they view the service employee as the means by which organizations convey these components of service quality (Brady& Cronin, 2001).

Meyer and Allen (as cited in Jackson, 2004),) noted that affective commitment is the attitudinal constructs of the three composites of commitment; affective, cognitive and behavioral.  Affective deludes pride to affiliation to organizational goals and feeling of satisfaction which is derived from movement with the companies from involvement with the company's goals. Cognitive includes the way employee's identity with organizational goals and values and having a shared sense of importance organizational goals. The behavior indicators include the active participation to the goals of the organization and their willingness to put more effort towards the accomplishment of the goals.

## 2. Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence as has its origins in the works of Thorndike's (1920) who suggested that intelligence could be divided into three dimensions i.e. the ability to understand and manage ideas (abstract intelligence), the ability to understand and manage concrete objects (mechanical intelligence), and the ability to understand and manage people (social intelligence). His description of social intelligence is the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls and act wisely in their human relationship. His concept of social intelligence is related to the current concept of Emotional intelligence. He identified that not all outcomes can be explained by intelligent quotient (IQ) hence leaving the concept of social intelligence to explain what could not be explained by IQ.

Gardner and Hatch (1989) furthered the works of Thorndike on the concept of social intelligence and came up with the concept of multiple intelligences and affirmed that there were no significant relationships between the other intelligences and IQ. Salovey and Mayer (1990)  developed  EI model and defined it as the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions

The concept of emotional intelligence became popular after the immense success of Daniel Goleman's books in the 1990s. The business community was rocked by the research that overwhelmingly showed that up to 90 per cent of one's performance effectiveness was due to emotional savvy rather than technological knowledge. What this in effect means is that the emotionally intelligent person is one who is able to process emotion-laden information and then use this information in cognitive tasks and other required behaviors (Palmer & Jansen, 2004).

It is also believed that emotional intelligence allows the person other ways of being and behaving as compared to those emphasized by traditional ideas of intelligence. It is thus possible for the person to develop these alternative ways of being in order to become more effective and efficient in both day-to-day living and in the workplace (Van Jaarsveld, 2003). Mayer et al. (2011) explain that Emotional intelligence consists of four branches of mental ability that is emotional identification, perception and expression, Emotional facilitation of thought, Emotional understanding and Emotional management.

For most people, including senior executives, it was thought that those with a higher Intelligence Quotient were the most important aspect of a company's success, but we can see Emotional Intelligence has become a vital part of how today's executives meet the significant challenges they face. Emotionally intelligent individuals can handle and perform efficiently in problems and emergencies and they have the ability to deal with any exceptional uncertainty. It is the capability to identify own and others feelings and utilize this awareness to facilitate own-self and others. A study looking at the relationship between EI and critical organizational outcomes suggests that the EI of employees is an important and practical aspect of organizations (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). Goleman (2002) has emphasized the importance of EI when managing people and indicated that it results in improving organizational performance.Due to the relationship between the leaders and the people they lead, an effective leader is one who will be able to manage not only their emotions but also have empathy for those they lead (Antonakis, Ashkanasy &Dasborough, 2009).

According to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (1999) emotional Intelligence refers to abilities concerning recognition and regulation of emotions in self and others, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. It also includes the ability to perceive, appraise and express emotion accurately and adaptively; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; the ability to access and generate feelings where they facilitate cognitive activities and adaptive action; and the ability to regulate emotions in one and others. Goleman (1998) describes emotional intelligence as managing feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together smoothly toward their common goals. According to Goleman, the four major skills that make up emotional intelligence are Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management as explained here under.

## 2.1. Self Awareness and Employee Commitment

Self-awareness is the foundation of personal growth and success. It is the capacity for introspection and the ability to reconcile oneself as an individual separate from the environment and other individuals. Self-awareness is the basis for the other components of emotional intelligence. It refers to a person's capacity for being aware of how they are feeling. In general, self-awareness allows a person to more effectively guide their own lives and behaviors. The ability to be critical about thoughts and changes to behavior can lead to an in-depth understanding about one's self, which leads to a better understanding of others. Team members need to be aware of their feelings as they may allow uncontrolled emotions to impact on the dynamics and culture of the team. Effective team members are self-confident, which is reflective of their own emotional self-awareness, and ability to control their emotions (Goleman, 2006).

Employee commitment was regressed on self –awareness and theresults from the regression model summary of employee Self-awareness and employee commitment shows anR-squared of 0.104 for male and 0.075 for female meaning 10.4% of employee commitment in males can be explained by changes in self-awareness compared 7.5% in females. . The results shows regression coefficient of 0.276 (t=2.074, p=0.043) in females and 0.279 (t=2.914, p=0.005) in males. This means that there is no significant difference in unit increase of employee commitment between females and males because for every 1 unit increase in self- Awareness in females, employee Commitment  increases by 0.276 units compared to 0.279 units in males.

## 2.2. Self-Management and Employee Commitment

Self-management refers to the act of taking responsibility for our emotions. This gives us a tool for making decisions that are the most supportive or our mental and emotional health.  That in turn helps us to be successful in motivating ourselves to achieve our goals. It helps us to overcome stumbling blocks and remain in action towards the things that we want in life. It lets us experience emotions without being controlled by them and it aids in ability to build strong, lasting, and rewarding relationships- both in and out of the workplace. Self-management includes emotional self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, optimism, achievement orientation and initiative (Boyatzis et al., 2004).Self-Management is the ability to use one's awareness of thoughts, physical sensation and emotions to bring oneself to a state of attention and

contemplation before action. Self-management fully mediates the relationship between social awareness and self-awareness. Self-management is a powerful tool with a foundation built upon solid self-awareness (the ability to be aware of thoughts, feelings and emotions and understanding the deeper signals they provide), it provides the ability to break a habit, let go of a thought or desire, and build resilience. It includes emotional, adaptability, conscientiousness, trustworthiness, initiative, optimism and achievement orientation.

Employee commitment was regressed on self –management and the results from the regression model summary of employee Self-management and employee commitment shows an R-squared of 0.507 ($F_{(1,77)}$= 78.098, $p<0.001$) for male and 0.052( $F_{(1,55)}$= 3.004, $p<0.089$)  for female. This shows that 50.7% of employee commitment in males can be explained by changes in self-management compared to females which shows that self-management is not statistically significant in influencing employee commitment in females. The results shows regression coefficient of 0.727 ($t=8.837$, $p<0.001$) in males and 0.236 ($t=1.733$, $p=0.089$) in females. This means for every 1 unit increase in self- management in males, employee Commitment increases by 0.727 units however but there is no statistically significant influence in females.

### 2.3. Social Awareness and Employee Commitment

Social awareness is the ability to perceive and understand the relationships and structures in which you and those around you are operating. It involves being able to understand how others are feeling and validating those feelings. It requires being able to recognize relationships and structures within your organizations or your social networks. The three skills comprising of this competency are empathy, organizational awareness and service orientation (Goleman et al, 2004). Empathy is about understanding and knowing other people's feelings, needs and concerns (Goleman, 2002). Empathy requires individuals to seek and truly understand why a person feels or behaves the way they do and what is motivating their feeling or behavior. It allows an individual to get in place of another person and see the argument or situation from their side. However, this does not require you to be in agreement with the other person but only allows you to understand and validate the other person's feelings.

Employee commitment was regressed on social –awareness and the results from the regression model summary of employee Social-awareness and employee commitment shows an R-squared of 0.292($F_{(1,55)}$= 5.125, $p=0.028$)  for female and 0.736($F_{(1,76)}$= 89.960, $p<0.001$)  for male meaning 73.6% of employee commitment in males can be explained by changes in social-awareness compared to 29.2% in females. . The results shows regression coefficient of 0.371 ($t=2.264$, $p=0.028$) in females and 0.748 ($t=9.485$, $p<0.001$) in males. This means that there is statistically significant influence of social awareness in both males and females. For every 1 unit increase in self- Awareness in females, employee Commitment increases by 0.371units compared to 0.748units in males. This means that focusing resources in developing Social awareness in males will add more value to the organization compared to the females.

### 2.4. Relationship Management and Employee Commitment

Relationship management inculcates set of competences which include essential social skill, analyzing and influencing others and inducing desirable responses in others. Relationship management ability provides an opportunity to develop social skills, which in turn provides an opportunity for the development of self-management and self-awareness skill. It involves interacting with others to help boost productivity, improving relationships and increase the general quality of life. Relationship management skills are essential for the development of positive, effective relationships with colleagues and the ability to interact with team members to deter conflict, be aware of, ease and dissipate underlying tensions that can accumulate and have a negative impact on working relationships and project success (Boyatzis et al., 2004).

Effective relationship management helps in developing others which is a hallmark of superior manager; among sales managers as it characterizes those at the higher level. Learning more about each other at work regardless of the designation leads to fast growth of a healthy relationship. It is not just the managers or superiors who are required to reach out to the members but the manner should be vice-versa (Boyatzis et al., 2002). Since emotional expression varies by culture, identifying and understanding others' emotional expression require both emotional and cultural intelligence skills. The ability to sense others' reactions and fine tune responses and be persuasive is a significant characteristic of star performer. This ability is essential for supervisors, managers, executives and for those who are managing front-line work; it has emerged as a fundamental skill for effective leadership as well (Goleman, 2002).

Employee commitment was regressed on Relationship Management and the results from the regression model summary of employee Relationship Management and employee commitment shows an R-squared of 0.299($F_{(1,56)}$ =5.478, $p=0.023$) for female and 0.637($F_{(1,76)}$ =51.234, $p<0.001$) for male meaning 63.7% of employee commitment in males can be explained by changes in Relationship Management compared to 29.9% in females. The results shows regression coefficient of 0.368 ($t=2.341$, $p=0.023$) in females and 0.634 ($t=7.158$, $p<0.001$) in males. This means that there is statistically significant influence of Relationship Management in both males and females. For every 1 unit increase in Relationship Management in females, employee Commitment increases by 0.368 units compared to 0.634units in males.

### 3. Conclusions

Research findings in this study suggest that there is relationship between Social Awareness, Relationship management and employee commitment in both the males and females.However, there is no statistically significant

relationship between Self-awareness, Self-management and employee commitment in females meaning that even if resources are allocated towards developing these two variables in females, there might be no change in the employee commitment. When Employee commitment is regressed on the four Variables of emotional intelligence, results shows that combined there is no statistically significant influence of emotional intelligence of female employees in the Saccos however, the results showed a positive statistically significant relationship as emotional intelligence explained 54.5% variation in employee commitment in males.

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