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## The Commitment of Workers in Public Sectors in Zanzibar: A Case of the Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication

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### **Abstract:**

*This article investigated if age, education, tenure, salary, gender, cultural setup and religious affiliation persuade employees' commitment in the Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication in Zanzibar. The exploration based on descriptive research design in which questionnaires were used for ordinary employees and retirees to get data and open questions to the executive officers to acquire ample array of data. The findings indicated that, demographic factors such as tenure, gender, salaries and education considerably influence human resources' commitment apart from age that has shown the mixed ideas among the respondents. Moreover, cultural setup and religious affiliation chiefly influence employees' obligation. The study recommends that since dimensions of employees' commitment are important determinants in influencing people to be dedicated to their organization; hence, the Ministry has to be conscious of the importance of these dimensions in providing a favorable working environment to its employees in attaining their full binder for the development of the Ministry.*

**Keywords:** *Affective commitment, commitment barriers, continuance commitment, employee commitment, normative commitment.*

### **1. Introduction**

The commitment of employees on public sectors is part and parcel of the organizational development (Storey, 2014). Without committed employees and professional ethics, the organizations will predict lower and poor quality of service delivery and will also increase the high level of accidents, theft and corruption (Burke, 2016). This is particularly true especially for the lowest paid, young professionals and male workers who were most likely to be paid the same rates as their counter-parts who were working in the same department and/or other regions in the same country. The commitment of employees is influenced by various factors such as competitive salaries, professional education, good communication, involvement in decision making and favorable working environment (Olubusayo, Stephen, & Maxwell, 2014). These factors remain a major challenge that undermines the capacity of the governments to attract and retain qualified personnel especially at technical, professional and managerial levels (Ramadhan, 2015). A report published by an International Survey Research reveals that, "an organization with committed employees is more likely to improve its profitability; for example, in ten (10) economic countries, Brazil has the highest level of committed employees whereby 79% are fully committed to their employers; hence, their economic and quality of service have been increasing on the day-to-day basis. Also, Germany has 74% of committed employees, while commitment in African countries is very poor (Sarah, 2002).

#### *1.1. An Overview of Employee Commitment in Tanzania*

In the Tanzanian context, there is a mixture of British and American style (Kakumba & Fennell, 2014). The country's system does not emphasize on professionalism: to avoid discrimination, the highly qualified candidates are picked (Tweve, 2015). Notwithstanding, the mixed systems of recruitment and placement of employees, Tanzania has many problems. In many public institutions, recruitments are based on technical know who, nepotism and friendship (Marijani; Shemdoe et al., 2016). The Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication in Zanzibar is not an isolated case but one of many examples. The study indicates that, majority of the employees have lower educational standards with no working experience because of poor recruitment practices based on family members, friendship or regionalism. This situation discourages qualified people by decreasing work spirits and occasionally necessitating turnovers. The intensity of poor service delivery

associated with a variety of factors (including those mentioned above) keeps the Ministry under hot discussion all over the country (Hill, 2014).

The commitment of employees in Zanzibar is alarming at all levels of the government entities. It has affected the production activities, quality of service delivery and the culture and traditions of Zanzibar (Organization, 2016). The situation has raised a debate among the people of Zanzibar who always blame the Ministry for its behavior characterized by intensive recruitment of unqualified and inhuman personnel (Mkama, 2015). The government has made commendable efforts to review the public-sector policy with the aim of improving the welfare of all public servants and to retain professional workers and maintain working ethics.

Hence, this study has surveyed different factors that weight employees' commitment in the Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication in Zanzibar. An investigation if factors such as age, education, tenure, salary, gender, cultural setup and religious affiliation do culminate in employees' commitment in the Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication in Zanzibar has been undertaken. Accordingly, the researchers sought to answer the following questions: i) How have demographic factors, such as age, tenure, salary, education and gender, influenced employees' commitment in the Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication in Zanzibar? ii) Does the level of employees' commitment differ on the basis of religious affiliation and cultural setup of the Zanzibaris? iii) Are there any differences between male and female employees in the commitment in the Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication in Zanzibar?

## 2. Methods and Materials

The research was conducted in the Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication in Zanzibar. Due to the nature of the research topic and the structure of the Ministry, the researchers were obliged to select the headquarters in Unguja and a Sub-office in Pemba. The headquarters constituted the department of policy, planning and research, road transport and licenses, administration and human resources, construction and road maintenance, and the department of Information, Communication and Technology, which also applied the same in Pemba office. The choice of the study area was twofold: firstly, the Ministry is constituted by other institutions which are independent in nature and could not give a clear picture of their antecedent problems. Such independent institutions were normally paid and taken care of differently by their own independent governing bodies. Secondly, this area is very open and could offer good cooperation with the researchers.

The population for this study covered the past and current employees in the Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication in Zanzibar (Unguja and Pemba), which comprised about 1185 employees allocated in five departments. Such departments include department of policy, planning and research; department of administration and human resources, department of road maintenance and construction, department of road transport and licenses, and department of Information, Communication and Technology at its Pemba Office, which was led by an Officer in Charge. The rationale for this selection was to avoid bias and increase validity and reliability of data. Simple random and purposive sampling designs were used to get ten (10) retired employees from MOIC. The sample size was drawn from five departments from the whole Ministry and from the retired population of the same Ministry by 9%. The sample size was constituted by 110 respondents comprising the following categories: 6 executives, 94 ordinary employees and 10 retired employees from both Unguja and Pemba.

Besides simple random and purposive sampling techniques, stratified random sampling technique was also used. The population was divided into gender sub-groups in both Unguja and Pemba and a simple random sample in each sub-group was taken. The sample for questionnaires was chosen using stratified random sampling to assist in choosing the most genuine sample. In order to validate the data, the following data collection tools were used: questionnaire, interview and documentary review. Nevertheless, ethical issues were observed so as to ensure that human rights and the country's policies and regulations were followed by researchers.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Respondents' Socio-economic Background

Different socio-economic background data were collected so as to acquire relevant and valid information. The data included age, educational level, religion and tenure of respondents. Each of these was elaborated in relation to the commitment of workers in public sectors in Zanzibar, specifically the Ministry for Infrastructure and Communication (cf. Table 1).

Age (%)				Sex (%)		Education (%)						Religion (%)			Tenure (%)					
20-30	31-40	41-50	<50	M	F	NF	PR	SC	C	DP	DG	MA	IS	CH	O	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30
20	44	20	16	69.1	30.9	6.4	10.6	35.1	18.1	21.3	7.4	1.1	97.9	1.1	1.1	16	12.8	116	22.3	21.3

Table 1: Respondents' Socio-Economic Background

M= Male, F= Female, NF= Non-Formal, PR= Primary, SC= Secondary, C=Certificate, DP= Diploma, DG=Degree, MA=Masters, IS=Islamic, CH=Christian, O= Others

The findings in (Table 1) indicate that majority of the respondents fall in the age category of 31- 40 years (44%) followed by the age category of 20- 30 years (20%), and then the age category of 41- 50 years (20%). A few respondents fall in the age category of more than 50 years (16%). These were nearly to retire. It was concluded that majority of the workforce were fairly young, ranging between 31-40 years. If they were maintained, they would provide quality of services.

Furthermore, the findings show that, among 94 people, 33 had secondary education and 1 had master's degree and above. Also, 6 people among 94 had informal education. Along the same vein, majority of the respondents had low education. Nevertheless, majority of the employees were males (69%). This shows that the question of gender balance was not given the deserved attention.

It was also observed that majority of the long service employees ranged between 16 – 20 years of service, and a few were between 31 – 40 years of service. These results show that the Ministry had many young energetic employees. Majority of the employees were Muslims (97.9%); a few were Christians and other religions.

In terms of remunerations, employees were paid differently as (Table 2) shows:

Observation	Frequency	Percentage
100,000 - 150,000	45	47.9
151,000 - 200,000	23	24.5
201,000 - 250,000	13	13.8
251,000 - 300,000	7	7.4
301,000 - 350,000 and above	6	6.4
Total	94	100.0

Table 2: Salaries of Respondents

The findings in (Table 2) reveal that, the salaries of majority of the respondents ranged between TSH 100,000 - 150,000 (45%). A few respondents' salaries ranged between TSH 301,000 – 350,350,000 (6%). This implies that salaries received by most employees in the Ministry were not sufficient to enable them cater for their basic needs. According to the Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, employees who do not meet their needs, particularly psychological needs and security at work, will not function efficiently.

### 3.2. Perceptions of Respondents Based on Research Questions

- How have demographic facto, such as age, sex, tenure, education and salary, influenced the commitment of employees in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Communication in Zanzibar?

This question was answered by three types of respondents: ordinary employees, retired people and executive officers. The question focused on four variables: salary, education, tenure and age.

#### 3.2.1. Ordinary Employees

Age in %	Tenure in %	Education in %	Salary in %
Old age 86.2	Long service 64.9	Low 40.4	Equitable 13.8
Young age 13.8	Short service 35.1	High 59.6	Inequitable 86.2

Table 3: Sample Profile (N=94)

The results in (Table 3) show that 86.2% of the respondents said that there was no equitable distribution of salaries between employees in the Ministry. However, 13.8% of the respondents said the distribution of salaries in the Ministry was equitable. In case of education, majority (59.6%) of the respondents agreed that, employees with high level of education were more committed than their counter-parts (those with low level of education).

This implies that trained employees require less supervision. They also increase organizational viability and are flexible. They usually show good attitudes and behavior with respect to their responsibilities.

The respondents also agreed that long service employees (64.9%) were more committed than those with few years of service. This means that, long service employees are more patient and do also fear to leave the organization because of labour market competition. As for the age group, the results showed that majority (86.2%) of the respondents disagreed that old employees were more committed than young employees. These results indicate that old employees were more tired, less energetic and nervous.

#### 3.2.2. Executive Officers

The question was on how the demographic factors, such as age, sex, tenure, education and salary, lead to the negative impacts on commitment of employees in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Communication?

This question carried three sub-questions based on four variables, namely unequal distribution of salary, nepotism in recruitment practices and human resource planning.

<b>Imbalance of salary %</b>	<b>Unfair recruitment %</b>	<b>Human resource plan %</b>
Agree 50	Agree 50	Agree 83.3
Disagree 50	Disagree 33.3	Disagree 16.7
Not responded	Not responded 16.7	Not responded

*Table 4: Perception of Ordinary Employees: Sample Profile (N =6)*

Competitive salaries and other incentives are key components that can attract and retain professional workers in any organization. The results indicated that 50% of the respondents expressed their concerns that the Ministry had a hierarchical pay structure designed from the central government. The system provided the chance to gain higher promotion and supported the recognition of differences in employees' skills, responsibilities and contributions to the organization. Further probing revealed that uniformity and divergence of salary distributions were influenced by work responsibilities and loyalty to the Ministry. For example, three executive officers said that there was no universal rule to determine the pay rates in the Ministry, as well as in the central government: the generalized policy, known as public service management policy of 2011, was used. This policy had defect: it caused bias between employees of the same area. They further argued that, the payment system favored some employees in that some got higher salaries and other got lower salaries though working in the same Ministry and living in the same localities. This tendency disappointed employees and resulted into poor commitment to work. Nepotism employed or promoted an employee because of his/ her family tie or friendship regardless of his/her skills or educational level. This increased corruption, absenteeism, theft, accidents and poor commitment. In this study, the question of nepotism was asked to executive officers and it was revealed that, there were divergent observations: 3(50%) of them agreed that the system of recruitment was unfair which made majority of the employees in the Ministry work sub-standardly. Their education and skills were not sufficient to perform better and more importantly, the system did not consider age groups. However, the central government had changed the system of recruitment and selected a special recruitment commission for merit-based-system, still there was no separation of personnel functions and politics because the commission was not autonomous since it was under the umbrella of the Minister of State – President Office, Constitutional Affairs and Good Governance –, who was the political head of the Ministry and his educational level was too low.

Nevertheless, another group of two respondents disagreed that nepotism in recruitment practices had a chance on the Ministry because the change of the public service management policy Act 2/2011 limited managers and administrators, even politicians, to take advantage in recruitment practices in the Ministry. Also, 16.7% of the respondents as reflected in (Table 4) were not in position to respond to the asked question.

The human resource planning is important for the survival of any organization in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. This plan ensures more efficient use of people at work and helps the organization to have the right people in the right place and at the right time. According to the results, majority (83.3%) of the respondents agreed that the Ministry had the plan but was not specific to the human resources' department. Furthermore, 16.7% of the respondents argued that the Ministry had poor planning and implementation of such a plan. The Ministry did not consider the evaluation of the plan. It also did not consider cost benefit analysis, which resulted into the accumulation of a number of unqualified employees who increased the government cost and accidents to the community. Moreover, there were many people who were about to retire, but there was no any effort to find other qualified workers to replace them upon retiring.

### 3.2.3. Retired People

This question was asked to the retired people and considered two variables: inequity of distribution of salaries and years of service. The rationale was that, they were experienced enough on commitment practices based on years of service and income (salary).

<b>Inequity In Distribution of Salary %</b>	<b>Years Of Services %</b>
Agree 70	Agree 65.6
Disagree 30	Disagree 33.4
Not responded	Not responded
Total 100	Total 100

*Table 5: Perception of Retired People, Sample Profile (N= 10)*

The distribution of equitable salary in working areas is significant to employees to improve organizational commitment. The results in (Table 5) indicate that, 70% of the retired people confirmed that the salaries provided by the Ministry were not fair, whereas (30%) said that the salaries were equitable but were designed according to the educational level and working experience (tenure) of an employee. Moreover, it was revealed that, 65% of the respondents agreed that long service employees were more committed than the younger ones, who had not yet acclimatized to the working environment. Other 33.4% of the respondents disagreed that the young employees were less committed compared to the older ones.

### 3.3. Perception of Respondents on Cultural and Religious Affiliation

- Does the level of employees' commitment differ on the basis of religious affiliation and cultural setup of Zanzibaris?

This question was answered by all three groups of respondents, namely executives, ordinary employees and retired people from MOIC.

Religious & Cultural Affiliation% (Ordinary Workers)	Religious And Cultural Affiliation % Retired People
Agree 77.7	Agree 63.4
Disagree 21.3	Disagree 37.6
Not sure 1.1	None
Total 100	Total 100

Table 6: Ordinary Employees and Retired, Sample Profile (N=94, 10)

The results in (Table 6) indicate that majority (77.7%) of the respondents agreed that religion had an influence on work, whereas 21.3% disagreed that religion and culture had the influence on employees' commitment. On the other hand, 1.1% of the respondents were not sure whether both religion and culture had the influence on the employees' commitment in the Ministry.

#### 3.3.1. Perception of Executive Officers on Influence of Religion and Culture

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Agree	4	66.7.0
Disagree	2	33.3
Total	6	100.0

Table 7: Islamic Behavior and Its Practices, Sample Profile (N=6)

The results in (Table 7) indicate that majority (66.7%) of the respondents said that, religion and culture did not influence employees' commitment to work since the organization had its own culture and values to prevent any destructive change introduced by other people. When asked about prayers and dresses, they said that, there was no banning law; hence, the people dressed properly. Other 33.3% of the respondents said that, religion and culture had the influence on employees' commitment to work because religion is part and parcel of human life. Since majority of the Zanzibaris are Moslems, all organizations situated in Zanzibar are likely to follow the environmental culture of Zanzibar in order to avoid organizational crises. This may be exemplified by the fact that, in 2009 the Officer in- Charge of the Ministry of Agriculture in Pemba banned women from wearing Hijab<sup>1</sup> during office hours. This action had consequences to Muslims living in Pemba; hence, some Muslim leaders planned to approach the President of Zanzibar against this ban. However, some men decided to ask their wives to turnover for the bad Islamic behaviour shown by the Officer In-charge.

### 3.4. Perception of Respondents on Gender Commitment

- Are male employees differing on commitment practices with their female counterparts in the Ministry?

#### 3.4.1. Perception of Ordinary Employees and Retired People

Variable	Agree	Disagree	Percentage
Ordinary employees	62	32	100
Retired people	08	02	100

Table 8: Male and Female Commitment

Results from ordinary employees in (Table 8) indicate that 62(66%) respondents agreed that male employees were highly committed compared to female employees, whereas 32(34%) disagreed that males were highly committed compared to women employees in the Ministry. In contrast, results from retired people in (Table 8) indicate that 8 (80%) respondents said that, male employees were more committed than women, while the remaining 2(20%) respondents disagreed that, male employees were more committed compared to women employees in the Ministry.

<sup>1</sup> Is a special piece of cloth that female Muslims use to cover their heads. In the Muslim community, it is mandatory for women to cover their heads.

### 3.4.2. Perception of Executive Officers on Gender Commitment

The term ethics refers to the collective codes of conduct that exist over and above the individual and which can be used to legitimate independent action [kindly show authority from which you extracted this definition]. Being the case, executive officers were asked about the individual collective codes of conduct at the working area, the results of which indicated that, women were more disciplined than men in the Ministry. A further probing question revealed that, many women in the Ministry were quiet, honest and dedicated to work. One of the six respondents said that, the male employees were more disciplined compared to women employees. When asked to give reason(s), he said that, “women are naturally rude particularly when pregnant”.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Male	5	83.3
Female	1	16.7
Total	6	100.0

Table 9: Gender Ethics and Participation, Sample Profile (N=6)

### 3.4.3. Gender Participation

Results in (Table 9) show that majority (83.3%) of the respondents said that male employees participated fully at work places. In contrast, females' participation was not good: they used to miss for some working days due to the biological factors and home affairs such as caring of children and other domestic chores. But when female employees came to work, they were more serious and remained in the office at all times compared to males.

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Basing on this exploration, there are many factors that can influence employees' commitment to work, some of which include: age, sex, education, salary, tenure, religion, culture, and fairness of policies, competence, job challenges, degree of autonomy and a variety of skills used. However, some researchers suggest that even though other factors are involved, commitment to the organization is probably most reflective of how employees feel about leaders and the behaviors they exhibit [there is no prior mention of this source. Kindly insert the year in lieu. This is consistent with a number of previous studies which have found out that workers who are older have more commitment to their organizations than the younger ones. Again, nowhere has this been cited before in this work. Kindly insert the year in lieu of op.cit.] These results also bear out the work of other researchers who found job tenure, salary and educational level to be significant predictors of employees' commitment.

The age and job tenure are significant predictors of organizational commitment, maybe due to the fact that the longer the workers stay in an organization, or the older they are the more time they have to evaluate their relationship with the organization. It is also likely that workers with higher educational qualifications occupy higher ranks and therefore have more responsibilities which invariably require more commitment to the organization. The findings that gender was significantly related to the organizational commitment supports the work by Fisher (year???) who found out that male employees were more committed to the organization than female employees. An explanation for these findings might be that male employees rather than female have more family responsibilities to cater for, and their obligations require financial support; hence, they are more committed to the organization. In addition, the female employees were considered as caregivers of children as well as people responsible for maintaining households.

Nevertheless, equitable distribution and competitive salaries resulted into employees' turnover, absenteeism, corruption, theft of public resources, and course of negligent behaviors like accidents and harsh language in providing public services. All these impacted negatively on the Ministry: there was poor delivery of social services.

Lastly, the age and tenure of employees are important to be considered. If the Ministry had not considered the question of age and tenure for its employees, long service employees (who are mostly loyal to the employers) would not have shown any relationship to the newly recruited and inexperienced workers, majority of whom were young. Moreover, young employees could disregard the aged people; hence, the Ministry could create antagonism between the two groups and eventually it would end up with management failure. Above all, organization managements should provide necessary facilities, valuable organizational climate and take actions that cater for the welfare of the workers to improve organizational commitment.

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