

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT AND
ITS IMPLICATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL OWNERSHIP
BEHAVIOUR: EVIDENCE FROM 5 SELECTED PRIVATE HIGHER
LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN RWANDA**

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed factors contributing to employees' commitment and its implication on Organizational Ownership Behaviour in Rwanda considering Private Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) as case study. The aim of the research was to examine factors contributing to employees' commitment as well as the dimensions of employees' commitment and Organization Ownership Behaviour. Data was collected from 5 Private HLIs with a sample of 24 employees in each which makes a total number of 120 respondents. The findings revealed that employees' commitment is grounded on a combination of different factors namely employees' involvement in decision making, open communication, organizational culture, work environment and career growth opportunities. The results highlighted that HLIs do not put more emphasis on enhancing various dimensions of employees' commitment. It was also revealed that 47.6% of respondents are not proud of their work place, 44.5% work due to lack of alternative employment opportunities which affect their level of performance. From selected HLIs, 36.1% avowed that they do not feel concerned with problems of employing organizations. The study concluded that HLIs lack proper management of employees as key players of academic excellence. It was found out that there is lack of emphasis on employees' commitment factors which in turn lead to Organization Ownership Behaviour. It has been proved that if employers take care of their employees, they will in turn satisfy the organization customers' needs. The study recommends Private HLIs effectively manage employees so that they may successfully accomplish their duties and responsibilities. This would lead towards better employees' performance and good quality of education.

Keywords: Employees, commitment, Organizational Ownership Behaviour

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The significance of conducting research on employees' commitment is mainly associated with its contribution to organizational performance. Employees' commitment increases individual performance through social behavior, innovation, low level of absenteeism and low turnover intent (Guzeller & Celiker, 2020; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). Commitment is a

multidimensional approach which integrates different viewpoints but the present article is bound on affective, continuance and normative perspectives (Hamadamin & Atan, 2019; Hadi & Tentama, 2020; Khan et al., 2021). Employee commitment is an attachment of employees to an organization which makes them feel the need of serving the organization and helping it achieve its objectives (Jyoti et al., 2020). Given the importance of orienting efforts in the domain of employees' commitment due to its contribution to organizational performance, it becomes imperative to conduct related research. Therefore, the research focuses on assessing factors which contribute to employees' commitment and its implication on Organizational Ownership Behaviour in 5 selected higher learning institutions. The study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Assess factors which contribute to employees' commitment;
- ii. Analyse dimensions of employees' commitment and Organization Ownership Behaviour; and

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The section reviews different studies related to employees' commitment and its implication on Organizational Ownership Behaviour (OOB). Literature review turns around the theoretical review, conceptual framework, and dimensions of employees' commitment as well as empirical review. The study is grounded on two theories namely Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Social Identity Theory (SIT).

3.0 THEORETICAL REVIEW

The section turns around Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Social Identity Theory (SIT). It states the linkage between what employers invest in employees and what they may expect from them. Making this relation healthier would create a safe working environment in terms of management and employee's productivity.

3.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) states that people who give much to others get much from them and vice versa. In employment context, the theory explains that for employers to get much from employees, they need to invest more in them. That is, when employers give appropriate consideration and motivation to employees, they become more committed and attached to employing organization which increases their ownership and commitment level (Zoller & Muldoon, 2018). SET confirms that best Human Resource Management (HRM) practices initiate a positive behaviour which employees give in return to employers' positive attitudes. The fundamental principle of SET is that employees consider satisfying HRM practices as an important ingredient which increases employees' commitment to organisations (Ashton, 2018; Taheri et al., 2020). This exchange initiates a good working environment which leads to organisation performance. To sum up, SET indicates that social exchanges employees obtain from organisations such as HRM best practices lead them to ownership and commitment to organizational plans (Atrizka et al., 2020).

3.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) stipulates that within organisations, people feel the sense of belongingness and classify themselves in social categories which develop a sense of social cohesion leading to employees’ commitment (Brown, 2019). SIT is explained as part of individuals’ self-concept. It comes from enjoyment that a group member gets from his/her social group with value and emotional significance attached to that membership. A group of people who perceive themselves as members of a same social category share some emotions and feelings which tie them together (Hogg, 2016; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). This togetherness contributes to attachment bond which links employees to employing organizations with the aim of remaining with co-workers (Harwood, 2020). SIT passes through three main stages that are categorization, identification and comparison.

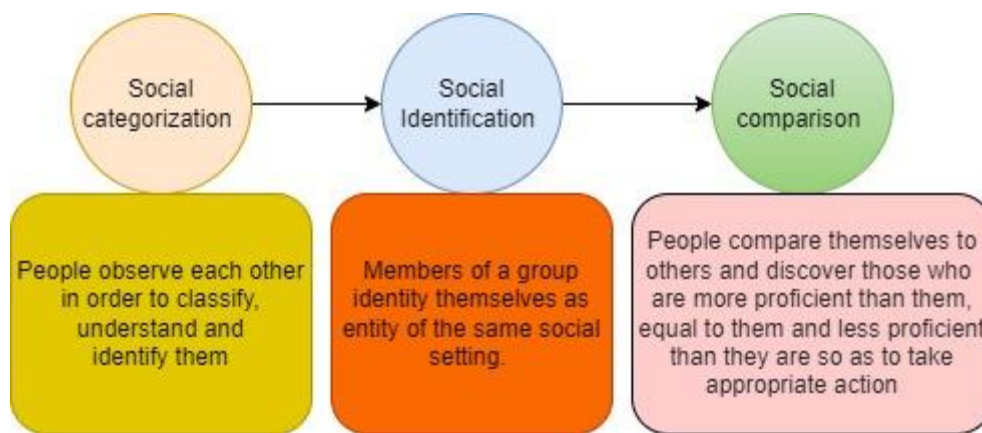


Figure 1: SIT stages: adapted from Trepte & Loy (2017)

3.3 Conceptual model

The figure presents the dimensions which lead to employees’ commitment and its contribution to Organization Ownership Behaviour (OOB). Furthermore, it highlights the types of employees’ commitment without which organization ownership suffers.

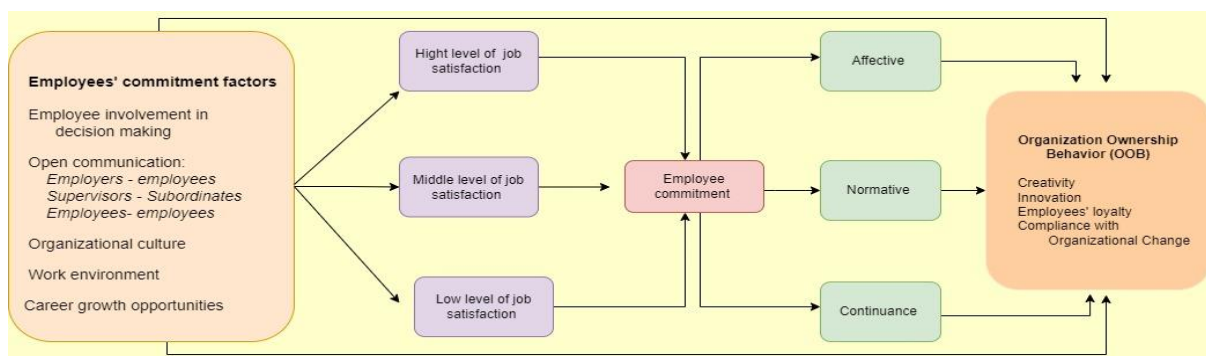


Figure 2: Employees’ commitment Conceptual model

Employees’ commitment revolves around employee involvement in decision making, open communication, organization culture, work environment and career growth opportunities. Involving employees in decision making contributes to greater opportunity of sharing ideas, learning from each other, surfacing strengths and weaknesses and working together to achieve

common objectives. This fosters complementarity and collaboration to accomplish organizational goals (Mambula et al, 2021).

Open communication is one of the key elements that enhance employee's commitment when people are able to express themselves, their thoughts and ideas without any constraints. They feel valued when communicating to each another. Communication when effectively channelled contributes to clarity of what is to be achieved, when, how and why. For organizations to be successful, they need to invest more effort in establishing clear communication channels and means. It avoids misinterpretation and confusion which creates conflicts at workplace (Cui, 2021).

Organization culture includes the definition of values, beliefs, structure, expectations and experiences shared by strategic, tactic and operational leadership and employees. It is an integral part in guiding decisions and shaping a good working environment; the base of actions to the creation of consistency (Mulugeta, 2020). Furthermore, work environment is about settings, situations, conditions and circumstances under which people work. It is about horizontal and vertical relationship that exists between employees-employers, employees-employees as well as different factors which include technical, human and organizational environment (Suprapti et al., 2020). There are three components of workplace environment namely technical environment (tools, equipment and technological infrastructure), the organizational environment (systems, procedures, practices, values and philosophies and human environment (peers, team and work groups, interactional issues and leadership) (Bridges et al., 2020). Human environment is understood as interaction which exists among colleagues, teams as well as supervisors/managers-subordinate relationship that prevail within organizations (Luo et al., 2021).

Conducive workplace environments give pleasurable experiences to employees and make them eager and committed to achieve organizational objectives while unconducive workplace environments give painful experiences and lead to employees' negative behavior. When the work environment is smooth and friendly, it becomes easier to positively accept feedback from managers and peers (Weinstein et al., 2021).

3.4 Dimensions of employees' commitment

The study mainly focuses on affective, normative and continuance commitment. The first dimension of employees' is affective. It occurs when employees are emotionally attached to employing organization. Employees who are attached to employing organization based on affective commitment scrutinize their personal employment relationship as harmoniously matching with goals and values of the organization. It is subjective to factors such as clarity of roles, goals, openness between leaders and followers (Ribeiro et al. 2020). Affective commitment is a psychological state that shapes positive relationship between employees and employing organization and influences employees' decision to continue working with it (Ribeiro et al., 2021).

The second dimension of employee commitment is normative. It is a kind of employee attachment which is based on social norms, obligations and ethical values. Normative commitment is defined as a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Internalized normative beliefs of duty and obligation make individuals indebted to sustain membership

within organization (Phungula et al., 2022). Employees with normative commitment feel that they have to remain with employing organization because it is the appropriate decision. When employers recognize employees' contribution to organizational success stories, their commitment level becomes higher which in turn increases individual and organizational productivity (Wang & Hu, 2022).

Lastly comes continuance commitment which is a kind of organizational employees' attachment based on costs associated with leaving employing organization (Kasogela, 2019). It influences employees' decision to remain not because of emotional bond or feeling of obligation but because of avoiding costs related with leaving the organization. Continuance commitment can be regarded as an active attachment to organization whereby employees' bond is based on an assessment of monetary incentives gained (Galanaki, 2020).

3.5 Empirical review

In order to get a good understanding of employee commitment and its implication on organization commitment, several studies were reviewed.

Dalkrani & Dimitriadis (2018) conducted a study on the Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Commitment. They underlined that any organization planning to reach its objectives has to develop conducive working environment that motivates employees. Once employees are motivated, they are more committed to productivity which increases organizational performance. Compensation, working conditions employees' relationship and promotions create and enhance a positive work atmosphere leading to high organizational performance.

In the same views, Machokoto, (2019) articulated that high organisational commitment feelings positively affect organisational performance as they lessen the frequency of negative behaviour and improve quality services. Employees' commitment has been expounded to be an important aspect underpinning organization to achieve its objectives. Working environment is dynamic and only committed employees are able to integrate changes towards organizational growth.

Hadi & Tentama (2020) conducted a study on indicators of organizational commitment revolving on three aspects namely affective, continuance and normative commitment. The three aspects of organizational commitment were analysed. Findings revealed that the dominant aspect of organizational commitment is normative commitment with a loading factor of 0.926. The results revealed that compliance with norms, rules and obligations binds people to organization. Continuance commitment was found to be the weakest aspect of organizational commitment with a loading factor of 0.807 while affective commitment has a loading factor of 0.885.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a structured scientific approach used to collect, analyse and interpret quantitative and qualitative data to answer research questions. It is a plan that keeps the researcher on track of research (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). The study was conducted in four provinces of Rwanda and Kigali City. Respondents were selected from five Private Higher Learning Institutions. The Selected Private Higher Learning Institutions were Kibogora Polytechnic, Protestante Institute of Social Sciences (PIASS), Institut d'Enseignement

Superieure de Ruhengeri (INES), East African University of Rwanda (EAUR) and University of Kigali (UoK). In each Institution, 24 respondents were selected through stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 120 respondents and data were quantitatively (Pandey & Pandey, 2021).

4.1 Findings

The section presents data related to factors contributing to employees' commitment and its implication on Organizational Ownership Behaviour. Analysis and discussion of collected data was based on Social Exchange and Social Identity theories. Different researches have proved that productivity is closely linked to employees' wellbeing which results from the exchange between employees and employing organizations.

4.2 Factors contributing to employees' commitment

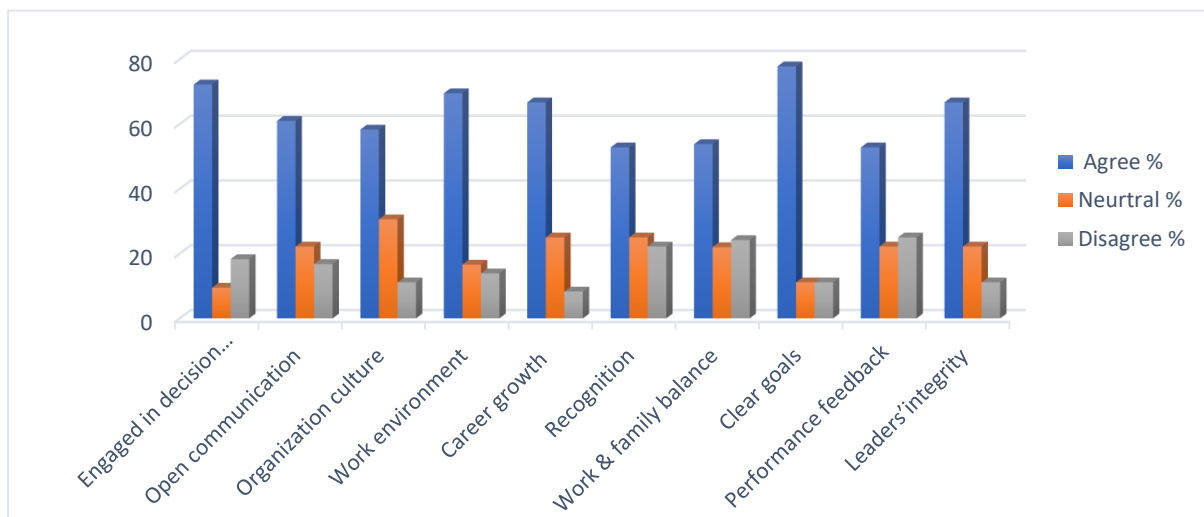


Figure 3. Factors leading to employees' commitment

Being involved in the decision making enhances the possibility of successful implementation of decisions. Among respondents who participated in the study, 72.2 % confirmed that they are involved in decision making, 18.3% have never participated in decision making, 9.5% did not express themselves. It is to be noted that 27.8% of respondents who are not involved in decision making constitute a hindrance to organization productivity. Respondents confirmed that being involved in decision making makes them feel valued and thus enhance their level of commitment. The results of the present study are concurrent with the findings of Mambula et al. (2021) who highlighted employee involvement in decision making to be an effective tool which increases organization productivity. The findings revealed that allowing employees to take part in decision making increases employees' level of commitment, creativity and innovation.

Among factors which were assessed, open communication was one of them. The results revealed that 61% confirm being satisfied and 16.8% were not satisfied and were frustrated by communication, 22.2% did not express their position. It is to be pointed out that the portion of 39% of respondents who are not satisfied by the kind of communication used cannot be ignored.

Communication plays an important role within an organization. It is an essential element for boosting effective collaboration which positively affects organizational performance and decision making. The results are supported by the findings of Musheke & Phiri, (2021) which confirmed that effective communication impacts on organizational performance. From the findings, effective communication has been proved to be a key element which leads any organization to the increment of productivity.

As far as organizational culture application is concerned, 58.3% are happy, 11.1% are not happy and 30.6% did not express their position. Considering findings about the work environment, 69.5% asserted that there is a favourable work environment, 16.6% were neutral and 13.9% disagreed. The results revealed that organization culture and work environment are closely linked to organization productivity. It is in this line that Mulugeta (2020) confirmed that organizational culture contributes to employee job performance. The emphasis was that employee participation and innovation have a considerable contribution to employee job performance.

The researchers assessed employees' career growth opportunities and the results revealed that 66.7% agreed, 25% were neutral while 8.3% disagreed that they did not get career growth opportunities. Career growth provides employees with necessary skills and abilities required for job performance. Focusing on educational institutions especially universities, it is worth important to emphasize on developing skills of academic staff so that they may in turn increase the quality of their teaching. Considering the results, 33.3 % of academic staff who did not get career growth opportunities cannot be overlooked. The study by Delbari, et al. (2021) has shown that educational institutions, especially universities, need to provide their staff with the opportunity to develop their full potentials through strengthening their self-regulation and increasing their productivity.

It was worth important to look at employees' recognition whereby 52.8% confirm that their effort is recognized, 25% were neutral while 22.2% disagreed about the statement. The results elucidate employee recognition within sampled universities is at lower level. It is to be emphasized that when employees' efforts are not recognized, their motivation decreases. It is in this line that Kwarteng et al, (2024) state that when employee's efforts are recognized, it positively motivates and influences employees towards high productivity. The study portrays employee recognition to be a strong predictor of employee productivity.

Regarding balancing work life and family life, 53.8% agreed, 22% were neutral and 24.2% disagreed about the statement concerning whether there is a balance between work and family life. This shows that 46.2% of respondents realize a mismatch between work and family life which is a key factor towards employees' dissatisfaction and lower productivity. The results of the present study concur with those of Ngozi & Chinelo (2020); Isa & Indrayati (2023) which found that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. It was proved that employee performance is closely connected with work and family life balance. The study found out a momentous influence of workload pressure on productivity. In addition, it was emphasized that family stress exercises a major effect on employee productivity. Substantial

Employees are highly committed towards goals achievement when the set goals are clear and well communicated. It is in this line that 77.8% revealed that the set goals are clear, 11.1%

were neutral and 11.1% disagreed. This implies that once goals are set and well communicated, performance evaluation takes place. It is in the same line that Fitriah, et al. (2021) in their study on effect of goal setting and intrinsic motivation on teacher work performance found out that there is a direct effect of goal setting on teacher work. High level of performance is grounded on clear goal setting and communication which strengthens intrinsic motivation in school teachers. This requires employers and employees to discuss about performance feedback for future improvement. With the statement about performance feedback, 52.8% agreed, 22.2% were neutral while 25% disagreed about getting performance feedback. When employees do not get feedback on how they perform, they do not realize areas to be improved and the ones which are appreciated which negatively affect their future performance.

Furthermore, increasing productivity requires integrity from leaders able to treat employees fairly and equally and thus create a conducive workplace free from conflicts and unfairness. In this line, 66.7% confirmed having leaders with integrity, 22.2% were neutral while 11.1% disagreed about having leaders who apply fairness and integrity. Staffs do not leave in isolation; they live in a group of individuals who work together to achieve the organizational expectancy. Adams (2015), the initiator of equity theory asserted that when staffs realize any kind of unfairness regarding their management and treatment, their motivation decreases. Staffs compare themselves with their colleagues inside and outside of the employing organization. In case they realize any kind of unfairness, their motivation decreases which affects their level of performance. In the same vein, Essien & Ogunola (2020) in their study on workplace fairness and organisational citizenship behaviour: Implications for Nigerian employees found out that employees have the desire to be treated fairly and equitably which has a considerable influence on work performance. For organisations to improve employees’ performance, productivity and commitment, they need to perceive all sorts of fairness. Once fairness and equity are well perceived, employees go beyond performance expectations leading organizations to high competitive advantage.

4.3 Dimensions of employees’ commitment and Organization Ownership Behaviour (OOB)

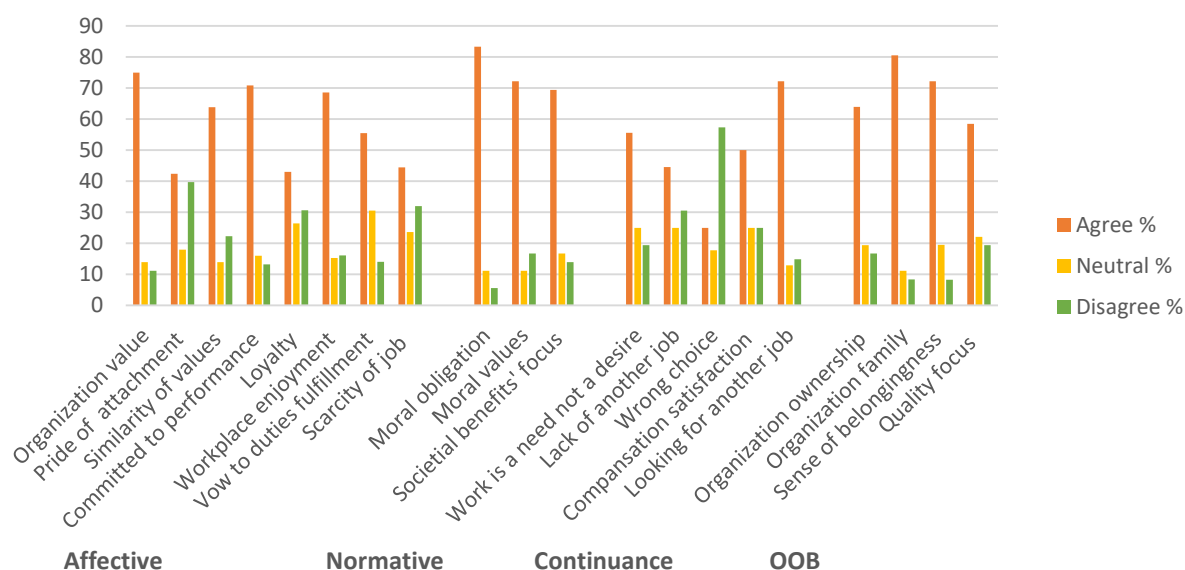


Figure 4. Employees' commitment and OOB

Considering employees' affective commitment, 75% of respondents agreed that the organization has value to them, 11.1% disagreed and 13.9% were neutral. If employees do not value their employing organization (25%), their level of commitment and ownership decreases. This implies that they do not feel attached to the organization which destructively affects their productivity. However, 42.4% agreed that they are proud of their work place, 17.9% were neutral while 39.7% disagreed. This is a significant percentage to be cared for. Considering the noble mandate of Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) which is teaching, research and service to the community, the statistics in figure 4 highlight the necessity of investing more in Human resources especially academic staff. They are key players towards academic excellence without which HLIs cannot achieve their targets. From the total number of respondents who participated in the study, 63.8% agreed on the similarity of personal values with organization values, 13.9% were neutral and 22.3% disagreed. To be able to achieve organization goals, there is a need of matching organization values with those of employees. This can be achieved through various activities such as seminars, workshops and discussions about what is to be done, why and how. It makes employees develop a sense of attachment and commitment. From sampled respondents, 70.8% are committed to organizational performance, 16% are neutral while 13.2% disagreed. Employee commitment is an important ingredient towards increased productivity. As far as respondents' loyalty is concerned, 43% agreed, 26.4% were neutral while 30.6% disagreed about being loyal to their organization. This implies that 57% of respondents can leave their organization whenever they get job opportunity elsewhere. Among them, 68.6% agree that they enjoy their workplace, 15.3% were neutral and 16.1% disagreed. There is lack of employees' commitment to the fulfillment of their duties as testified by 55.5% who agreed, 30.5% were neutral and 14% who disagreed about their vow to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. This is justified by a considerable number of respondents (44.4%) who agreed that the reason of remaining with their HLIs they work for is because of scarcity of work, 23.6% were neutral while 32% disagreed.

The findings revealed that there is lack of employees' attachment to employing organizations which results in poor performance. They are working with their employer due to the lack of alternative employment. This is supported by the results from Ribeiro et al. (2021) who found that perceptions about authentic leadership are positively related to their affective commitment and Organizational Ownership Behavior (OOB). Moreover, affective commitment utterly connects authentic leadership to OOB. Researchers have proven that authentic leaders increase employees' affective bonds to their organization and, therefore, strengthen employees' tendency to feel more engaged in organizations and develop OOB.

As regard to normative commitment, 83.3% asserted that they perform their duties due to moral obligation, 11.1% were neutral and 5.6% disagreed. From total respondents, 72.2% agreed that they perform their work because of moral values, 11.1% were neutral while 16.7% disagreed. Working for societal benefits was agreed by 69.4% of respondents, 16.7% were neutral and 13.9% disagreed. This implies that the performance of their work is not linked to work enjoyment; it is rather their moral obligation and ethical values. The results uncover the employees' treatment gap and the level of none satisfaction ranges between 16.7% and 57.6%. This justifies that a considerable number of employees are not motivated. Unmotivated

employees (22.2% to 47.2%) do not care about the implication of their poor performance on society. Their reason of not resigning relies on economic constraints.

The present study results concur with the findings of Phungula et al. (2022) who discovered that Employee Value Proposition (EVP) factors greatly contribute to employees' normative commitment. EVP is a set of offerings that an employee gets from an employer in exchange to the work done. The three EVP factors (work, rewards and opportunity) constructively correlate with normative commitment. Human Resource's Practitioners are advised to improve work environment in which employees' motivation is given value so that they may be able to reach the organization goals.

Last but not least comes continuance commitment whereby 55.6% specified that they work because of need not a desire, 25% were neutral and 19.4% disagreed. The situation is worsened by a considerable number of respondents (44.5%) who accentuated that they work because of lacking another job. This portion of employees does not have any attachment with their employer's organization and their level of performance is doubtful. From the total respondents, 25% state that they have made a wrong choice where they work, 50% are satisfied with the compensation they get while 25% were not satisfied. Among respondents, 72.2 % confirmed that they are working as they are still looking for another job. The results confirm that there is lack of satisfaction among employees which implies absence of commitment towards their work performance. From the results, it can be stated that lack of continuance commitment devastates employees' performance.

The outcomes of the research align with Kasogela, (2019); Gilbert & Konya (2020) and Kuhal, et al (2020) whose researches stressed that employees' continuance commitment and job performance are closely associated. This proves that there is a significant relationship between continuance commitment and organisational productivity. The studies have evidenced that continuance commitment of employees is affected by intrinsic motivation.

From sampled Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs), 63.9% avowed that they are more concerned with problems of their employing organizations and do their best to be problem solvers, 19.4% were neutral while 16.7% disagreed. As far as feeling member of organization family is concerned, 80.5% state that they feel like their organization is a family they belong to, 11.1% were neutral and 8.4% disagreed. Developing a sense of belongingness was confirmed by 72.2% of respondents, 19.5% were neutral while 8.3% disagreed. Focusing on quality of work, 58.5% voiced their agreement, while 41.5% do not care about the quality of their work. Employees' ownership is suitable for improving organization productivity. The findings are supported by Kim & Patel (2021) who asserted that when employees feel committed and focus on their work, they invest more efforts for attainment of organizational goals which contribute to its growth and competitive advantage.

5.0 CONCLUSION

It is worth noting that various factors contributing to employees' commitment has been assessed among 5 private Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) in Rwanda. Findings indicated that HLIs have a big challenge to meet quality teaching due to considerable number of employees who are neither involved in decision making nor given an opportunity to grow in their careers. It was also realized that employees are not fairly treated, their contribution is not

recognized and in most cases, they do not get performance feedback. There is no balanced work and family life which creates everlasting fatigue towards poor delivery. Organizational Ownership Behavior is recognized through affective, normative and continuance commitment that are dimensions of employee's commitment. Private HLIs have hindrances to successfully attain their goals as a result of having an important portion of employees who are not attached to the organization. They are constrained to remain with their employing organization due to economic necessity.

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