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## THE MODERATING INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATION SUPPORT ON COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

*The main objective of this research study was to determine the influence of organizational competence development on commitment in the civil service in Kenya, and whether perceived organizational support moderates this relationship. The study used a descriptive survey research design with a target population that comprised 813 employees working in the ministry of interior and national administration, in western region. A sample size of 265 respondents was drawn from this population by use of stratified sampling techniques involving top management, middle management, and the support staff, followed by a proportionate allocation and finally, simple random sampling from each of the stratum. A census was used to obtain five (5) senior managers. Data collection was done by use of self-administered questionnaire and analysed by use of the means, standard deviations and Percentages. Furthermore, correlation bivariate and the linear regression analysis were used to test for the degree of association (correlations) between the variable pairs and their influence on employee commitment. In addition, hierarchical and step wise regression analyses were conducted to determine the moderating influence of perceived organizational support on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment. The findings revealed that competence development has a positive and significant influence on employee commitment, while perceived organizational support has a significant moderating influence on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment. The study recommended that the ministry of interior and national administration should endeavor to deliberately develop the competences of its workforce in order to ensure sustained employee commitment, as well as, increased performance of both the employee and the organization.*

**Key words;** Competence Development, Perceived Organizational Support, Employee Commitment

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## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Employee commitment is said to be highly valued by many organizations because it reduces withdrawal behaviours such as voluntary turn over, non-attendance to duty and postponement (Frimpong, Amoako, Akwetey-Siaw, Boakye, Adu, Suleman & Bawa, 2024; Jahan, Huynh & Mass, 2022; Kengatharan, 2021; Kulkarni & Mishra, 2021; Pepple, Akinsowon & Oyelere 2021; Eshiteti, 2019). Similarly, employee commitment has attracted a lot of attention in academia (Frimpong *et al.*, 2024; Juma & Nthiga, 2022; Eshiteti, 2020). It has attracted increased attention in both academic research work and organizational practice. Therefore, employee commitment is a very desirable and crucial component in the behaviour of employees within an organization as well as in their own performance (Alkahtani, Iqbal, Sohail, Sheraz, Jahan, Anwar & Haider, 2020; Olori & Dan-Jumbo, 2017). Employee commitment has been defined as the psychological state of mind which characterizes an employee's relationship with his or her organization, or rather his or her decision to either continue or discontinue his or her membership with the organization (Jahan *et al.*, 2022; Pepple, Akinsowon, & Oyelere, 2022; Eshiteti, 2019; Eshiteti, Mukanzi & Senaji, 2018; Olori & Dan-Jumbo, 2017). It has been defined as the force that binds any individual employee to a given goal or course of action, which is classified into affective, continuance and normative dimensions (Jahan *et al.*, 2022; Kam *et al.*, 2016). Affective commitment is interpreted as the desire to continue working for the organization, continuance commitment interpreted as the perceived cost if an employee decides to leave, while normative commitment is seen as the obligation that one has to continue working for his or her organization (Frimpong *et al.*, 2024; Pepple *et al.*, 2021; Eshiteti, 2020). A number of scholars have argued that committed employees contribute directly to the growth and progress of any organization by providing opportunities that ensures staff satisfaction as well as lowering absenteeism (Pepple *et al.*, 2021; Hanaysha, 2016; Abdullah & Ramay, 2012). However, this critical component has been found to be quite elusive in many workplaces (Pepple *et al.*, 2021; Eshiteti, 2019). Such workplaces include the civil service sector in Kenya. Various scholars have also opined that the problem of employee commitment can best be solved by a number of Human Resource practices such as competence development within the organization (Alkahtani *et al.*, 2020; Khan, Tariq, Hamayoun & Bhutta, 2014) and the relationship enhanced by use of perceived organization support. Competence development refers to an ongoing the process throughout an individual's career that include both general and specific trainings in areas such as professional flexibility or social skills (Standar, 2022; Jonsson & Scholin, 2016). Accordingly, Standar (2022) argued that employees who receives such specific training as a competence development practice, they tend to stay employed in the same firm much longer than those who do not.

### Statement of the Problem

According to Jahan, Huynh and Mass (2022), Riyanto and Prasetyo (2021) the civil service in many countries, the Kenyan civil service included are suffering a great deal because of lack of commitment among its workforce. In the Kenyan context, the problem is even compounded by the poor tax regime (KPMG,2023), leading to high voluntary attritions of the best employees to the private sector (WB Report, 2018; Public service report, 2016; Maina, 2016) and other sectors of public service (Maina, 2016; Hope, 2011) such as politics and parastatals, leaving the less productive and more uncommitted in service (Omollo & Oloko, 2015). Furthermore, the poor performance of the civil service has eroded Kenyans' confidence in the public sector. This can be seen in the number of Kenyans traveling abroad for medication, better-quality education, or in search of employment. Despite the increase in taxes, the Kenyan government still finds it difficult to pay its workforce more competitively (Federation of Kenyan Employers, 2023; KPMG, 2023). According to the KPMG (2023) Finance Bill analysis report, the impact of the recent changes in the tax regime on employees is quite severe, especially at a time when many people are grappling with the high cost of living.

To mitigate on the adverse effects of uncommitted workforce, the government has used retrenchment, to help cut on the wage bill and further increase salaries of the remaining workers. In other instances, rationalization of staff and performance management strategies have been introduced to monitor and evaluate

employee performance, enhance efficiency and productivity (Pepple, Akinsowon, & Oyelere 2022; Maina, 2016). Further, there has been proposals for the freezing of employment in the public sector by the government (GoK, 2024). Nonetheless, many of these initiatives have failed to meet the intended purpose because of the solutions getting prone to unethical practices such as biasness and sheer favourism arising from political influence. According to Kumasey, Bawole and Hossain (2017); Trevino and Nelson (2013) unethical practices that include bribery and corruption, conflict of interest, sexual harassment, and the misuse of confidential information are very common in today's business setting. Therefore, this study proposes the use of HIWPs approach to enhance employee commitment in the civil service in Kenya.

A survey report by the Public Service Board taskforce (2017) indicated that the uncommitted workforce can cost the country between Ksh. 450 billion to Ksh 550 billion a year in lost productivity. Gallup (2013) studied about the state of American workplace and established that, over 70% of all employees in USA are not committed and so, not actively engaged to their jobs. These employees are affectively and normatively disconnected from their workplaces. Accordingly, Jyoti, Rani and Gandotra (2015) opine that high turnover of a talented and knowledgeable workforce seems to have compelled most organizations to shift their focus towards HIWPs in order to sustain their competitive advantage. Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel and Pierce (2013) suggested that the major predictor of voluntary turnover and hence, reduced performance, is lack of commitment among employees. Consistently, Eshiteti, Maragia, Okaka, Odera and Akarele (2013) pointed out that excessive voluntary employee turnover is a clear indication of reduced employee commitment.

Several studies have been done on HIWPs, many of whom have studied about its relationship with other outcomes such as innovation (Li *et al.*, 2022) employee performance (Jahan, Huynh & Mass, 2022; Boon, Den Hartog, & Lepak, 2019; Maheshwari & Vohra, 2015; Camps and Luna-Arocas 2009). Significantly, most of the HIWPs' literature, has been carried out in the USA (Doucet, Lapalme, Simard, & Tremblay, 2015; Guy, 2003), EU and the UK (Huo *et al.*, 2015), UAE and Asia (Jahan *et al.*, 2022; Jyoti *et al.*, 2015; Maden, 2015; Khan *et al.*, 2014; Behery, 2011). In Kenya, there are still knowledge gaps about the link between HIWPs and employee commitment in spite of a wealth of empirical literature abroad. However, Obenge, Okibo, Nyang'au, Ondieki, Nyongesa, & Nyamasege (2016) studied about staff training and employee commitment in Kisii county, Maina (2016), about employee empowerment and organizational commitment in the civil service, and Kimolo (2013) about employee empowerment and performance at the Regional Development Authorities in Kenya. All these studies indicated a significant relationship between the variables used. However, the scholarship link between HIWPs as a bundle and employee commitment in Kenya is still inadequate. Further, this is one topic that is yet to be addressed fully and therefore, the role-played by HIWPs in shaping employee commitment in the ministry of interior and national administration is still unclear.

### **Research Objective**

The objective of this study was to determine the moderating influence of perceived organization support on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment in the civil service in Kenya

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Competence development has been defined as the practices and mechanisms that allow or help employees to become involved in problem solving and managing of their work processes (Palma-Moreira, Dias, Pereira & Au-Yong-Oliveira, 2024; Standar, 2022; Boxall, 2012). One of the key factors for a successful competence development is the kind of management and organization that is behind it, since research has shown that workers who receive clear support and framework from the organization tend to be highly motivated to perform better (Standar, 2022; Srikanth & Jomon, 2020). As such competence development can be used as a tool to create change and enhance competitive advantage for the organization (Srikanth & Jomon, 2020; Dalimunthe, 2019). Accordingly, high-performing firms use competence development practices (skill development, mentoring, and coaching) for both improving the productivity of the existing employees and

sending employees the signal that decision makers are willing to invest in them beyond the short-term returns (Palma-Moreira *et al.*, 2024; Heilmann, Mika & Saminen, 2015; Collins, 2010). Furthermore, competence development practices to the organization represent major sources of competitive advantage and performance because organizations rely on frontline employee skills and initiative to identify and resolve problems, to initiate changes in work methods, and to take responsibility for quality of work done. Heilmann *et al.* (2015) did examine the relationship between competence development opportunities and organizational commitment and the mediating role of job satisfaction. The study used Quantitative survey data collected from a large forest company and an ICT company in Finland. The results demonstrated that perceived competence development opportunities are positively associated with organizational commitment. Thus, opportunities for competence development are seen to constitute the main content of an individual's psychological contract between employees and organization.

On the other hand, perceived organizational support is the tendency to have a general feeling of being supported across many circumstances by either the organization or its agents (Asya, 2011), mostly it has been operationalized in terms of personal focused support and task focused support (Eshiteti, 2019; Eisenberger, Shoss, Karagonlar, Gonzalez-Morales, Wickham & Buffardi, 2013), and supervisor support (Mukanzi *et al.*, 2014). One of the factors that help cultivate organizational commitment is the perception of employees about the available support at the workplace (Eshiteti, 2019; Eshiteti, Mukanzi & Senaji, 2018; Kurtessis, Eisenberger, Ford, Buffardi, Stewart & Adis, 2015; Mukanzi *et al.*, 2014; Neves & Eisenberger, 2014; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). That is, when employees feel that they are supported by the organization, they will develop a sense of commitment. Organizational support refers to individuals' perceptions about how much the organization values the employees' contributions and care about their well-being (Neves & Eisenberger, 2014; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). According to Neves and Eisenberger's (2014) study on the role of perceived organizational support on employee's risk taking, it was found that POS was positively related to failure-related trust among subordinates, which has a greater influence on employee commitment.

The relationship between perceived organization support at work and employee commitment is explained by the social exchange theory (Eshiteti, 2019), as well as the organizational support theory. The social exchange theory is grounded on quid pro quo principle, implying 'this for that.' Thus, it is more likely that a person will provide support to those who support him or her. In other words, if the employee feels that the supervisor provides support for him or her, he or she would work for the supervisor's benefit, and this way, the supervisor would provide more support to the employees. Similarly, employees form perceptions on how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. They will often respond to this with job attitudes and behaviours that could facilitate organizational success (Eshiteti, 2019; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2014).

Organizational support theory (OST) also holds that, in order to meet the socio-emotional needs and determine the organization's readiness to reward increased efforts, employees tend to develop a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2015; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Further, organizational support theory assumes that subordinates respond to favourable treatment from their supervisors with high POS and greater organizational involvement because they view their supervisor as an organizational agent whose behaviours towards them reflect the organization's intentions (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). On the other hand, Wikhamn, and Hall (2014) indicated that POS moderates the relationship between accountability and job satisfaction. However, organizational management differ in the manner in which they display the characteristics that strongly identifies the employees with the organization. As a result, employees identify some supervisors with the organization more than others (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, High-Involvement workplaces emphasize on competence development practices which include such practices as

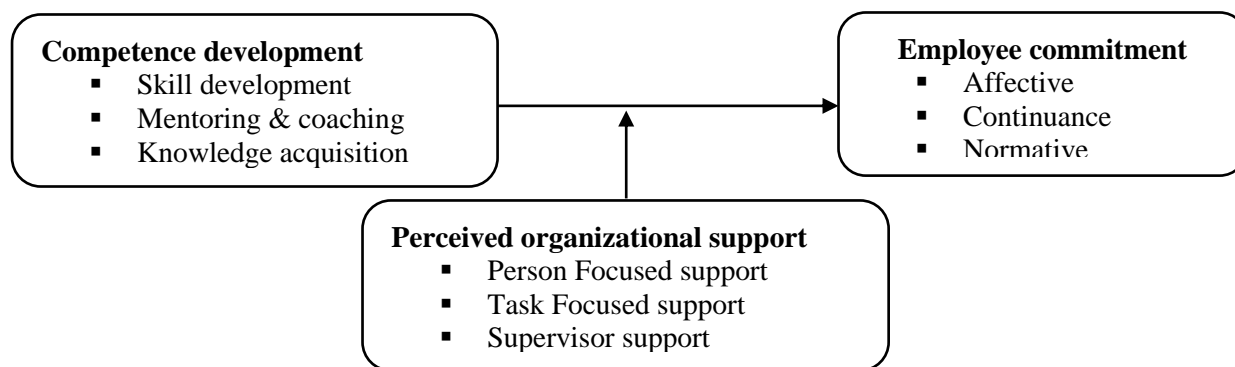
skill and knowledge development and mentoring programs which tend to improve on the productivity of current employees. This also sends the signal that the decision makers are more than willing to invest in their most important resources (HRs) beyond short-term returns (Yang, 2012; Paré & Tremblay, 2007). Furthermore, additional competence development practices tend to represent major sources of competitive advantage and performance because organizations rely on frontline employee skill and initiative to identify and resolve problems.

Employee commitment is very important to any organization given that it involves the desire of employees to maintain their membership within the organization (Li, Tong & Wong, 2024; Eshiteti, 2019; Eshiteti *et al.*, 2018; Mukanzi *et al.*, 2014). This implies that employee commitment is a measure of employees' willingness to continue working with the organization. According to Mukanzi *et al.* (2014) employee commitment concerns itself with the psychological state which characterizes an individual employee's relationship with his or her organization and whether he or she should continue or discontinue his or her membership with the firm. Various scholars have described employee commitment as a multi-dimensional construct of affective, continuance and normative sub constructs (Eshiteti, 2019; Eshiteti *et al.*, 2018; Meyer, Stanley & Parfyonayo, 2012). The different dimensions are also characterized by different employee attitudes. Accordingly, affective commitment has been described as the psychological state that increases an employee's likelihood to remain with the firm (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It is seen as an employee's emotional attachment to an organization as well as his or her desire to continue working for the same organization. They will do so because they want to.

Continuance commitment concerns one's awareness about the costs which are associated with the leaving of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). According to this sub construct, an employee prefers to stay with the organization because of the cost implications if he or she were to choose leaving the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This type of commitment is strongest when the available alternatives are few such that when employees are given better alternatives they may opt to leave. However, Meyer *et al.* (1990) maintains that the accrued investments and poor employment alternatives tend to force employees to maintain their line of action and, hence, remain committed since they may need to. This means that employees may stay in the organization because they may have been lured to by other accumulated investments which they may stand to lose if they were to leave.

Normative commitment refers to the individual's sense of obligation to stay with the organization out of the belief that it is the right thing to do (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Thus, internalized beliefs of duty and obligation can make individuals get obliged to sustain their membership in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Thus, normative commitment's strength is inclined to the acceptable rules about the reciprocal obligation between the organization and its members (Suliman & Iles, 2000). According to McDonald and Makini, (2000) reciprocal obligation philosophy demands that a person who receives a benefit will be under a strong normative obligation to repay that benefit in one way or the other and hence his or her commitment to the organization.

## Conceptual Framework



**Independent Variable**

**Moderating Variable**

**Dependent Variable**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive survey research design with a self-administered questionnaire given to 265 respondents who were selected from a target population of 813 employees from the four counties of Busia, Bungoma, Kakamega and Vihiga. Those working at the regional headquarters were also included in the target population. According to Kothari and Garg (2014) 10 per cent to 30 per cent of the population can be used in descriptive survey studies. Furthermore, stratified sampling technique, with a proportionate allocation of the sample sizes was used, followed by simple random sampling from each stratum which comprised of the top management, middle level management and the support staff. Competence development was measured in terms of skill development, knowledge acquisition, Mentoring and coaching constructs, with extensively validated 8 question items which were also adapted from Delery and Doty's (1996) and Pare and Tremblay's (2007) article and further used by Yang (2012). To operationalize POS, the sub constructs of 'person focused support', 'task focused support' and 'supervisor support' were used with 8 questionnaire items that loaded highly on the POS's survey and used further by Juma (2016), Eisenberger *et al.* (2013), Eisenberger & Stinglhamber (2011), and Asya (2011). Similarly, employee commitment was measured by affective, continuance and normative commitments as adapted from Meyer and Allen (1991) and espoused by many other authors (Eshiteti, 2019; Mukanzi *et al.*, 2014; Meyer *et al.*, 2012). It used a total of 12 questionnaire items for measurement. All the items were measured on a five-point likert scale that ranged from; 1=Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the data obtained was 0.871, 0.878 and 0.894 for competence development, perceived organizational support and employee commitment respectively. Descriptive statistics of percentages, means and standard deviations were used to analyse the data before the bivariate correlation and linear regression analyses were inferentially conducted to test whether competence development has significant influence on employee commitment. Furthermore, hierarchical regression and step wise regression analyses were carried out to determine whether POS has a significant moderating influence on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment. The estimated regression models used to investigate these relationships are shown.

$$Y = \alpha + X\beta_1 + \mu \dots\dots\dots (I)$$

$$Y = \alpha + X\beta_1 + ZX\beta_2 + \mu \dots\dots\dots (II)$$

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was analyzed by both descriptive statistics such as percentages, means and standard deviations as well as inferential statistics which comprised of correlations, linear, hierarchical and step wise regressions.

### Descriptive Statistics

This research study obtained the means, standard deviations and percentage response for each item. A five-point likert scale, was used to gain these responses, the measurement ranges from 1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree 3= Neutral, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly agree. Results were presented in table 1.

Accordingly, the findings in table 1 show that majority (82.2 per cent) of respondents disagreed with the suggestion that the development programs offered by the employer are enough to achieve the employee's performance goals. 13.1 per cent strongly disagreed with this view, while close to 1 per cent of respondents could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement. On the other hand, only 3.7 per cent of respondents agreed with this view. The response rate to this item gave a mean of 1.953, with a standard deviation of 0.537. In addition, results from table 1 also indicate that a majority (62.2per cent) of the respondents disagreed with the statement suggesting that the employer had achieved his or her skill development target within the last three years. Another 23.8 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. However, only 4.2 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement, with another 5.6 of the same participants strongly agreeing. 4.2 per cent remained indifferent to the said statement, since they could not agree or disagree with the said statement. The statement gave a mean of 1.860 and a standard deviation of 0.612.

Similarly, the result in table 1 indicated that a majority (82.7 per cent) of respondents disagreed with the statement suggesting that the employer helps them in skill development so as to increase their chances of promotion. 13.1 per cent of the respondents strongly disagreed with this view. On the contrary, only 3.7 per cent of respondents agreed with this statement, with a paltry 0.5 per cent unable to agree or disagree with the same statement. It obtained a mean of 1.949, and a standard deviation of 0.533. Furthermore, results in table 1 also revealed that a majority (78.9 per cent) of respondents disagreed that the organization that they work for does have a proper system that helps in identifying training and skill requirements. Another 12.0 per cent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the said statement. On the other hand, only 5.1 per cent of the respondents agreed, with another 3.1 per cent strongly agreeing with the same statement. Only 0.9 per cent of those participating remained indifferent. Nonetheless, this response gave a mean of 1.972 and a standard deviation of 0.597.

Consequently, the results in table 1 also show that a majority (67.8 per cent) of respondents did not agree with the statement suggesting that, they are rotated in various jobs in order to develop their skills and knowledge in their work. Another 29.9 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. On the other hand, only 1.4 per cent agreed with the said statement, with a paltry 0.9 per cent of respondents unable to agree or disagree with the same statement. A mean of 1.738 and a standard deviation of 0.545 were obtained. In a similar fashion, a majority (68.2 per cent) of respondents also disagreed that their organizations encourage them to pursue proficiency courses such as specialized technical courses and professional certification. Another 24.6 of the participants in this research study strongly disagreed with the same statement. However, 4.1 per cent strongly agreed with the same statement, with another 3.3 per cent simply agreeing with it. Similarly, this response gave a mean of 1.790, with a standard deviation of 0.603.

Equally, the findings in table 1 indicate that a majority of respondents did not agree with that their organizational environment enables them to apply new skills in their work performance. Another 12.5 per cent of the respondents in the study strongly disagreed with the same statement as suggested. However, 5.3 per cent of those that participated in this research study agreed with the said statement, while 3.1 per cent strongly agreed with it. Close to 1.0 per cent could not agree or disagree with the same statement. Consequently, the responses to the said statement gave a mean of 1.911 and a standard deviation of 0.490. Finally, table 1 results indicate that 81.1 per cent (a majority) of respondents disagreed with the statement suggesting that the

employer encourages employees to apply their new abilities and skills in the context of daily work. Another 11.5 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. On the contrary, 3.6 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while another 3.3 per cent simply agreed. There was negligible indifference from the respondents on this front. Furthermore, response gave a mean of 1.907, with a standard deviation of 0.485. These findings are shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Competence Development**

		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std dev.
		%	%	%	%	%		
1	My organization's development programs are enough to achieve my performance goals	13.1	82.2	1.0	3.7	0.0	1.953	0.537
2	My organization has achieved its targets on skill development for the last three years	23.8	62.2	4.2	4.2	5.6	1.860	0.612
3	My organization helps me develop my skills in order to increase my chances of being promoted	13.1	82.7	0.5	3.7	0.0	1.949	0.533
4	My organization has a proper system to help in identifying training and skill requirements	12.0	78.9	0.9	5.1	3.1	1.972	0.597
5	My organization rotates me in various jobs in order to develop my skills and knowledge in my work	29.9	67.8	0.9	1.4	0.0	1.738	0.545
7	My organization has encouraged me to pursue proficiency courses such as specialized technical courses and professional certification	24.6	68.2	0.0	3.3	4.0	1.790	0.603
8	My organizational environment enables me to apply new skills in my work performance	12.5	78.2	0.9	5.3	3.1	1.911	0.490
9	My organization has encouraged me to apply my new abilities and skills in the context of my daily work	11.5	81.1	0.5	3.3	3.6	1.907	0.485

### Perceived Organizational Support

This study also sought to determine the moderating influence of perceived organizational support on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment. POS was operationalized by nine (9) questionnaire items which were adapted from Eisenberger *et al.* (2013); Eisenberger *et al.* (1986). The research study obtained the means, standard deviations and percentage response for each item. A five-point likert scale, was used to gain these responses, the measurement ranges from 1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree 3= Neutral, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly agree. Results were presented and shown in table 2.

The findings in table 2 show that accumulative majority (A=83.2 per cent, SD=3.3 per cent) of respondents agreed with the statement suggesting that the employer cares about the wellbeing of her employees and supports them fully. On the contrary, only 5.1 per cent of respondents disagreed with this statement, while another mere 1.0 per cent strongly disagreed with the statement. However, another 7.5 per cent could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement. The statement's response gave a mean of 3.874, with a standard deviation of 0.607. Similarly, the results in table 2 also show that a majority (75.2 per cent) of respondents were of the view that their employer strongly considers their goals and values in work related matters. Another 3.7 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. On the contrary, 10.0 per cent of those surveyed could not agree with the same statement, while another 1.2 per cent strongly disagreed with it. Nonetheless, 8.8 per cent of those who participated in this study could not agree or disagree with the same statement. Furthermore, the statement's response gave a mean of 3.738 and a standard deviation of 0.683.

In addition, the results in table 2 revealed that accumulative majority (A=57.2 per cent, SA=11.9 per cent) of respondents agreed that their employer helps them when they experience some personal problems. 7.1 per cent of those surveyed could not agree with the said statement, while 3.8 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. Substantially, 20.2 per cent could neither agree nor disagree with the statement. A mean of 3.492, and a standard deviation of 0.754 were obtained for this statement. Furthermore, 63.1 per cent (a majority) of respondents agreed that their employer cares about their opinions on personal matters, while

another 10.9 per cent strongly agreed with the same statement. On the contrary, 6.5 per cent of the participants disagreed with the statement as declared, while another 2.8 per cent, strongly disagreed. 16.6 per cent could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement. 3.628 was the response's mean, while 0.755 was the standard deviation.

Consistently, the results in table 2 indicate that 69.6 per cent (majority) of respondents agreed that the employer is always willing to extend herself to help them perform their jobs to the best of their abilities. Another 2.8 per cent strongly agreed with the same statement. However, 6.5 per cent of the respondents could not agree, while 4.5 per cent strongly disagreed with the statement. Substantially, 16.6 per cent of respondents could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement. This statement gave a mean of 3.678, with a standard deviation of 0.660. Similarly, another majority (59.5 per cent) of respondents agreed with the view that the employer appreciates any extra effort from her employees. Another 3.7 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with the same statement. Nonetheless, 8.9 per cent could not agree with the same statement, while another 2.3 per cent strongly disagreed with the same statement. 25.5 per cent could not agree nor disagree with the statement. Thus, the statement's response gave a mean of 3.535, with a standard deviation of 0.801.

In addition, results in table 2 indicate that a majority (65.9 per cent) of respondents agreed that the employer shows concern about their work success. 4.7 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 14.7 per cent of the respondents disagreed with this statement, with another 1.9 per cent strongly disagreeing with it. However, 12.9 per cent remained indifferent to the statement. A mean of 3.668, and a standard deviation of 0.723 were obtained respectively in this response. Similarly, the findings in table 2 show that a majority (61.2 per cent) of respondents were of the opinion that the employer compensates them fairly in exchange for effort. Another 2.8 per cent of the respondents, strongly agreed with the same statement. On the other hand, 10.3 per cent of those surveyed disagreed with the said statement, while another 3.7 per cent strongly disagreed with it. Substantially, 22.0 per cent of the participants in this research were indifferent to the said statement. Nonetheless, the statement's response gave a mean of 3.491, with a standard deviation of 0.860. Equally, the results in table 4.18 revealed that a majority (75.4 per cent) of respondents agreed that their organization provides practical assistance to them when they experience problems in doing their work. Another 6.4 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with the same statement. On the contrary, only 4.2 per cent of those surveyed disagreed with the said statement, with another paltry 1.4 per cent strongly disagreeing with it. However, 12.6 per cent could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement. This gave a mean of 3.762 and a standard deviation of 0.616. These findings are presented and shown in table 2.

**Table 2: Perceived Organizational Support**

		1	2	3	4	5	mean	Std. dev.
		%	%	%	%	%		
1	My organization cares about my wellbeing and supports me	0.9	5.1	7.5	83.2	3.3	3.827	0.607
2	My organization strongly considers my goals and values in work related matters	1.2	10.0	8.8	75.2	3.7	3.738	0.683
3	My organization helps me when I have a personal problem	3.8	7.1	20.2	57.2	11.9	3.492	0.754
4	My organization cares about my opinion on personal matters	2.8	6.5	16.6	63.1	10.9	3.628	0.755
5	My organization is willing to extend itself to help me perform my job to the best of my ability	4.5	6.5	16.6	69.6	2.8	3.678	0.660
6	My organization appreciates any extra effort from me	2.3	8.9	25.5	59.5	3.7	3.535	0.801
7	My organization shows concern about my work success	1.9	14.7	12.9	65.9	4.7	3.668	0.723
8	My organization fairly compensates in exchange for effort put	3.7	10.3	22.0	61.2	2.8	3.491	0.860
9	My organization provides practical assistance when I have a problem in doing my work	1.4	4.2	12.6	75.4	6.4	3.762	0.616

## Employee Commitment

The study went further to determine how far do employees within the civil service are committed to their organization and how such commitment could be influenced by competence development. Employee commitment was operationalized by use of twelve (12) questionnaire items and subdivided into the affective, continuance and normative commitment constructs as adapted from Allen and Meyer (1993), as well as Meyer and Allen (1991) article. All measures of employee commitment used a 5-point likert scale from 5= strongly agree (SA) to 1= strongly disagree (SD).

The findings are presented in table 3 as indicated. The findings in table 3 show that a majority (72.0 per cent) of the respondents indicated that they feel happy and that they are still willing to spend the rest of their career with their current employer. Another 4.7 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 12.0 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the same statement, while 1.9 per cent strongly disagreed with it. 7.5 per cent of the respondents could not agree or disagree with the said statement. A mean and standard deviation of 3.735 and 0.539 were obtained respectively. Similarly, the results in table 3 revealed that a majority (69.0 per cent) of respondent feel emotionally attached to their employer. 6.5 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with the said statement. On the contrary, 10.0 per cent of the participants disagreed with the statement, while another 2.3 per cent strongly disagreed with the said statement. However, 12.1 per cent of those surveyed could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement. The statement's response gave a mean of 3.697 and a standard deviation of 0.502. Furthermore, a majority (63.5 per cent) of the respondents indicated that their organization means a great deal to them personally. Another 7.5 per cent strongly agreed with the said statement. Nonetheless, 15.0 per cent of the respondents could not agree with the statement, while 1.4 per cent disagreed strongly. 12.6 per cent could not agree or disagree with the said statement, which also gave a mean of 3.721 and a standard deviation of 0.602.

In addition, the results in table 3 show that a majority (60.5 per cent) of the respondents feel like being part of family to their organization. Another 8.4 per cent strongly agreed with the statement. However, 11.0 per cent of the respondents couldn't agree with the said statement, with another 1.4 per cent strongly disagreeing with the statement. 18.7 per cent could neither agree nor disagree with it. A mean and standard deviation of 3.569 and 0.658 were obtained respectively. Consequently, the findings in table 3 indicate that a majority (70.1 per cent) of respondents feel a strong sense of belonging to their employer. 4.7 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement as declared. On the other hand, the results also indicate that 10.3 per cent of the respondents disagreed, while 3.5 per cent of respondents strongly disagreed with the same statement. A mean of 3.692 and a standard deviation of 0.547 were obtained. Equally, the findings in table 2 show that a majority (54.4 per cent) of respondents agreed that they would disrupt their lives if they were to straight leave their current organization. 8.4 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with this view, however, 20.0 per cent of the respondents could not agree with the said statement, with another 5.5 per cent strongly disagreeing with it. A mean and standard deviation of 3.458 and 0.768 were obtained respectively.

Further, results in table 3 also show that a majority (56.4 per cent) of respondents agreed that the organization they work for has made it necessary and desirable for them to stay within it till now. A further 4.7 per cent strongly agreed with the said statement. On the contrary, 21.2 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the said statement, with a further 2.3 per cent strongly disagreeing with it. Substantially, 15.4 per cent of the respondents could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement. A mean of 3.546 and a standard deviation of 0.621 were obtained for this response. In addition, a majority (60.3 per cent) of the respondents did agree that their organization had left them with very few options to consider leaving the organization. Another 5.6 per cent strongly agreed with the same statement. On the other hand, 13.5 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the same statement, with another 1.9 per cent strongly disagreeing with it. Largely, 18.7 per cent of the respondents could not agree or disagree with the statement. A mean of 3.632 and a standard deviation of 0.639 were obtained respectively. Similarly, the findings in table 2 revealed that a

majority (62.1 per cent) of respondents suggested that they feel a sense of moral obligation to remain with the current organization, with another 5.1 per cent strongly agreeing with the same statement. Nonetheless, 9.2 per cent of the respondents categorically disagreed with the said statement, with another 4.5 per cent strongly disagreeing with it. Equally, 19.0 per cent of the respondents could not agree or disagree with the said statement. However, the statement's response gave a mean of 3.673 with a standard deviation of 0.611.

Consistently, the findings in table 3 indicate that a majority (55.6 per cent) of the respondents agreed that their employer deserves all the loyalty from them. Another 4.2 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with the said statement. On the contrary, 20.7 per cent of the respondents simply disagreed with the statement, while another 4.9 per cent strongly disagreed with it. 14.6 per cent could neither agree nor disagree. The statement's response gave a mean and standard deviation of 3.575 and 0.693 respectively. Furthermore, a majority (54.6 per cent) of respondents agreed that they would feel guilty if they were to leave the current organization. A further 4.2 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with the said statement. On the other hand, 23.9 per cent of the respondents disagreed, while another 6.9 per cent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the same statement. 8.6 per cent of those surveyed could neither agree nor disagree with the same statement. It gave a mean of 3.388 and a standard deviation of 0.832. Finally, the findings in table 3 indicate that an accumulative majority (A=57.3%, 10.2%) of respondents agreed that if they were to get a better job offer elsewhere, they would not feel it right to leave their current organization. A further 10.2 per cent strongly agreed with the same statement. On the contrary, 21.2 per cent of the respondents could not agree with this statement, while another 9.5 per cent strongly disagreed with it. Only 1.9 per cent of the participants remained indifferent. A mean and standard deviation of 3.664 and 0.851 were obtained respectively. These findings are presented and shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Employee Commitment**

		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Mean	Std.
		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		dev.
1	My organization makes me feel happy and willing to spend the rest of my career with it	1.9	12.0	7.5	74.0	4.7	3.735	0.539
2	My firm makes me feel emotionally attached to it	2.3	10.0	12.1	69.0	6.5	3.697	0.521
3	My organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	1.4	15.0	12.6	63.5	7.5	3.721	0.602
4	My firm makes me feel like part of the family	1.4	11.0	18.7	60.5	8.4	3.569	0.658
5	My firm makes me feel a strong sense of belonging	3.5	10.3	11.5	70.1	4.7	3.692	0.547
6	Leaving my firm right now would disrupt too much of my life	5.5	20.0	11.7	54.4	8.4	3.458	0.768
7	My firm has made it necessary and desirable to stay with it	2.3	21.2	15.4	56.4	4.7	3.546	0.621
8	My firm has left me with very few options to consider leaving	1.9	13.5	18.7	60.3	5.6	3.632	0.639
9	I feel a sense of moral obligation to remain with my firm	4.5	9.2	19.0	62.1	5.1	3.673	0.611
10	My organization deserves my loyalty	4.9	20.7	14.6	55.6	4.2	3.575	0.693
11	I would feel guilty if I were to leave my firm now	6.9	23.9	8.6	54.7	5.7	3.388	0.832
12	If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it right to leave my organization	9.5	21.2	1.9	57.3	10.2	3.664	0.851

### Inferential Analysis

To further test for the influence of competence development on employee commitment, a correlation (bivariate) and linear regression analysis was carried out. The result of the correlation analysis is presented in table 3 and interpreted thereof.

**Table 4. Correlation Matrix**

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Competence development	1				
2 Affective commitment	.772**	1			
3 Continuance commitment	.820**	.411**	1		
4 Normative commitment	.857**	.436**	.681**	1	
5 Employee commitment	.528**	.488**	.401**	.242**	1

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

The findings in table 4 (correlation matrix) revealed that competence development has a positive and significant influence on affective commitment ( $r=0.772^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). In addition, the influence of competence development on continuance commitment was also found to be positive and significant ( $r=0.820^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, the influence of competence development on normative commitment was found to be positive and rather the highest as well as significant ( $r=0.857$ ,  $p=0.01$ ). Nonetheless, the findings in table 4 revealed that the independent variable competence development was found to have a positive and significant influence on the computed variable of employee commitment ( $r=0.528^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings were corroborated by those from the previous studies (Standar, 2022; Heilmann *et al.*, 2015; Paré & Tremblay, 2007).

Therefore, this study can infer that competence development has a positive and significant influence on employee commitment. These results corroborate earlier findings of Paré and Tremblay (2007) who did note that competence development practices represent major sources of competitive advantage and performance because organizations rely on frontline employee skills and initiative to identify and resolve problems, to initiate changes in work methods, and to take responsibility for quality of work done. Consistently, Heilmann *et al.* (2015) examined the relationship between competence development opportunities and organizational commitment and the possible mediating role of job satisfaction. The results demonstrated that perceived competence development opportunities are positively associated with organizational commitment.

### Competence development and Employee commitment

In order to determine the amount of variation of independent variable (competence development) that would explain a given change in the predicted variable (employee commitment) a linear regression analysis was conducted and the results obtained presented in table 5. In view of this results, it was established that competence development has a positive and significant influence on employee commitment ( $r=0.528^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, in order to determine the specific amount of influence, competence development (predictor variable) was regressed against employee commitment and the results presented in tables 5, and 6 and interpreted thereof;

**Table 5: Competence Development and Employee commitment**

Model Summary						Change Statistics	
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.528 <sup>a</sup>	.279	.277	.55546	.279	78.110	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), competence development

The study findings as shown in the table 5 indicate the quantity of variance on employee commitment (the predicted variable) as explained by a given change in competence development (second predictor variable). The results of the regression analysis as shown in table 5 gave a correlation coefficient, R value of 0. 528 and  $R^2=0.279$ . This implies that 27.9 per cent of the corresponding change in employee commitment could be explained by the competence development. Furthermore, the results obtained in table 5 gave an F change value of 78.110,  $p < 0.01$ , a value which is a large enough and sufficiently so, to support the goodness of fit of the estimated regression model which explains the variation in employee commitment. Therefore, this

confirms that competence development is a useful predictor for the employee commitment in the civil service in Kenya. Table 6 shows that the unstandardized coefficients of competence development.

**Table 6: Competence development Coefficient's**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
1 (Constant)	2.549	.190		15.096	.000
Competence development	.519	.062	.528	9.331	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee commitment

Further, the unstandardized coefficients  $\beta$  value of the computed scores of competence development was 0.528 with a t-value of 9.331, at  $p < 0.05$ . Since the t-value is greater than +1.96, the estimated regression model in table 5 is significant and applicable. Similarly, with a  $p < 0.05$  it implies that for every 5 per cent increase in competence development there was a predicted increase in the percentage of employee commitment of zero. Therefore, having achieved the set objective, this study rejected the null hypothesis stating that;  $H_{01}$ : competence development has no significant influence on employee commitment.

### Moderation Relationship

This study also sought to determine the moderating influence of perceived organizational support on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment in the civil service in Kenya. In order to test for the moderating influence, the study carried out a hierarchical regression analysis. In so doing, the explained variable (employee commitment) was kept in raw form, while the predictor variables (competence development) and the moderating variable (perceived organizational support) were mean centered. According to Chauhan *et al.* (2017), mean centering of variables tend to reduce the risk of multicollinearity. After mean centering, competence development (predictor variable) was multiplied by the moderating variable (perceived organizational support) to create the interaction term. Furthermore, a series of linear regression analysis was conducted using the standardized predictor and moderating values against the explained variable (hierarchical regression). This analysis did seek to first determine the influence of the selected control variables (age, highest level of education, job category, and work experience) on the predicted variable (employee commitment). This was followed by a series of linear regression analysis. Lastly, step wise regression analysis was also carried out to determine the incremental contribution of each independent variable on the explained variable.

### Hierarchical Regression Analysis

In step 1, the three demographic variables of age, level of education, and the experience were used as control variables, giving rise to model 1. It was necessary to control for these particular variables because some of them have been found to influence certain outcomes, especially those that are related to the human resource within the organization (Eshiteti, 2019; Wambua & Karanja, 2016; Magosh & Chang, 2009). According to Magosh and Chang (2009) enhanced level of education tend to influence an individual's level of commitment. In step 2, the predictor variable of competence development was added in to the regression model to yield model 2. Nonetheless, the variables were entered into the regression model after standardizing them in order to reduce the possibility of a multi-collinearity problem in the analysis. It did ensure that the scores for the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were all below 10.0. In step three, the standardized moderating variable (perceived organizational support) was added to the regression model, generating model 3 which is shown in table 6. Finally, step four involved the addition of the interaction term (products of the standardized predictor variables and moderating variable), to give model 4. Therefore, the hierarchical regression model summary that was obtained is shown in table 6:

**Table 6: Hierarchical Regression Model**

Model	Model Summary						
	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.139 <sup>a</sup>	.019	.005	.70717	.019	4.554	.276
2	.667 <sup>b</sup>	.445	.443	.49927	.426	94.976	.000
3	.723 <sup>c</sup>	.523	.520	.48956	.078	26.368	.000
4	.776 <sup>d</sup>	.602	.600	.42127	.079	23.676	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), work experience, age, education level

b. Predictors: (Constant), work experience, age, education level, competence development

c. Predictors: (Constant), work experience, age, education level, competence development, POS

d. Predictors: (Constant), work experience, age, education level, competence development, POS, competence development × Perceived Organizational support

The results obtained in table 6, showing model 1 indicate that cumulatively, all the three demographic variables (control variables for this study) have a positive, although insignificantly associated with employee commitment in the civil service in Kenya ( $r = .139$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This did show that the control variables were weakly but positively correlated to employee commitment ( $r = .139$ ). Therefore, this model was insignificant ( $p > 0.05$ ) and could only explain 1.9 % of variance in employee commitment (the dependent variable). Hence, this model was found to be neither fit nor applicable. Furthermore, on addition of the standardized independent variable (competence development) to model 1, it generated model 2 as shown in table 6. Subsequently, competence development, was found to be positive and significantly correlated to employee commitment in the civil service in Kenya ( $r = 0.667$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The  $R^2$  value increased by .426 to .445 which implies that the second model could explain 44.5 per cent of variance in employee commitment at  $p < .01$ . These findings did support the alternative hypothesis that competence development has a positive and significant influence on employee commitment in the civil service in Kenya. Therefore, model two was found to be statistically significant and applicable.

Similarly, the findings in table 6 also revealed that when POS (moderating variable) was added, it yielded model 3 which indicated that together with the predictor variable (competence development) and perceived organization support (moderating variable) were significantly and jointly correlated with employee commitment ( $r = 0.723$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Accordingly, when all demographic variables are controlled, the relationship between competence development (on addition of POS) and employee commitment was found to be positive and statistically significant. That is to say, that the change in  $R^2$  of .078, from .445 to .523. Therefore, model 3 could explain 52.3 per cent from 44.5 per cent of variance in employee commitment in the civil service in Kenya. Finally, in order to determine how POS moderates the relationship between competence development and employee commitment, the interaction term (competence development x Perceived organization support) was entered into the regression model giving rise to model 4. This caused a rise in the R-squared from .523 to .602. The findings revealed that POS has a positive and significant moderating influence on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment ( $R = 0.776$ ,  $R^2 = 0.602$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This meant that, on moderation, competence development could influence 60.2 per cent of variance in employee commitment. This model, was seen to be significant and applicable ( $p < .01$ ). Therefore, the hierarchical regression analysis results did reveal that with the addition of the interaction terms, the influence of competence development on employee commitment was enhanced by POS as the moderator. Furthermore, this influence was found to be strong and positive ( $r = .776$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, this study concluded that POS moderates the relationship between competence development and employee commitment in the civil service in Kenya. Nonetheless, hierarchical regression analysis can enable one to see if a variable of interest (POS) can statistically explain a significant amount of variance in the dependent variable, after accounting for all

other variables (Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003). This can be observed in the unstandardized coefficient table 7:

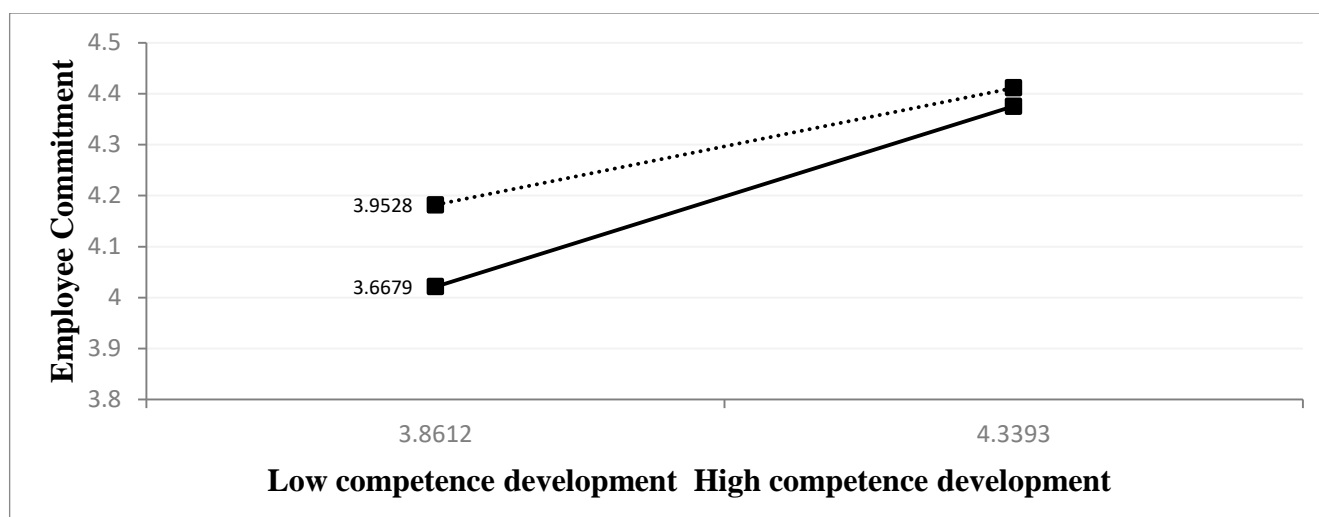
**Table 7: Unstandardized Coefficients (Hierarchical Regression)**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>			t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<b>Step 1: Control Variables</b>					
(Constant)	4.562	.465		9.807	.000
1 Age	.036	.082	.035	.443	.658
Education Level	-.115	.091	-.090	-1.269	.206
Length of Service	.005	.049	.008	.093	.926
<b>R=0.139, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.019, ΔR<sup>2</sup>=0.019, FΔ (3, 211) =4.554, P = 0.276</b>					
<b>Step 2: Independent Variable</b>					
(Constant)	3.849	.412		9.347	.000
2 Competence development	.389	.043	.521	9.047	.000
<b>R=0.667, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.445, ΔR<sup>2</sup>=0.426, FΔ (1, 210) =94.976, P = 0.000</b>					
<b>Step 3: Moderating Variable</b>					
(Constant)	3.863	.352		10.975	.000
3 Perceived Organization Support	.391	.041	.525	9.613	.000
<b>R=0.723, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.523, ΔR<sup>2</sup>=0.078, FΔ (1, 209) =26.368, P = 0.000</b>					
<b>Step 4: Interaction Term</b>					
(Constant)	4.136	.344		12.008	.000
4 Competence development	-.133	.030	-.209	-4.499	.000
*Organization Support					
<b>R=0.776, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.602, ΔR<sup>2</sup>=0.079, FΔ (1, 208) =23.676, P = 0.000</b>					

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

The findings from table 7 showed the results output of the unstandardized coefficients of a hierarchical regression analysis. Model 1 in table 7 indicated that the relationship between all the control variables and employee commitment was not significant (age, education level and length of service). However, a change among the control variables' influence on employee commitment occurred when the predictor variable (competence development) was added to obtain model 2. The non-significant results between all the control variables and employee commitment was altered once competence development (a predictor) was added and controlled, highlighting the importance of competence development on employee commitment. The addition of mean centred scores of perceived organization support in model 3 brought a significant change in the R<sup>2</sup>. It showed that the model could explain a 52.3 per cent of change in employee commitment when perceived organization support was added as a moderator from 44.5 per cent with a  $p < 0.01$ . Similarly, model 4 in table 7 showed that when controlled, the coefficient values of the computed (composite index) standardized scores of competence development was significant, when the interaction term of competence development \*perceived organization support was added. The R<sup>2</sup> value increased from 52.3 per cent to 60.2 per cent change in employee commitment.

However, to further interpret how POS moderates the relationship between competence development and employee commitment, regression equations were calculated for each level relationship at high and low levels of POS. The regressions were run on centred terms by use of the process model 1 method as advanced by Andrew F. Hayes (Dawson, 2014). The resulting values obtained which showed the interaction effects between the predictor variable (competence development) and the moderating variable (POS) were plotted on an interaction plot excel file to help interpret the interaction. As a rule of the thumb, non-parallel lines indicated an interaction, such that the more non-parallel the lines are, the greater the interaction. The result was plotted graphically and presented in figures 2.



**Figure 2: Competence development and Perceived organizational support Interaction**

The results as presented in figure 2 disclosed that when POS is high, the relationship between competence development and employee commitment was also high. However, when POS was low, then competence development was found to have a positive influence on employee commitment. Therefore, POS has a moderating influence on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment in the ministry of interior and national administration in Kenya. Consistently, POS tends to increase employees' effort outcome expectancy, making them to believe that their efforts can be rewarded (Eisenberger et al., 2013; Marique *et al.*, 2012). Consistently, Tuzun and Kalemci's (2012) suggested that employees can maintain their membership with the organization because of enhanced POS.

### Step-wise Regression Analysis

Similarly, in another analysis, POS was again treated as a moderator and the step-wise regression analysis performed to find out its incremental contribution on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment. Furthermore, the analysis was conducted to establish whether between the predictor variable (competence development) and the control variables (length of service, education level, and age) there was any that may have had the weakest contribution on the variance in employee commitment. such a variable would automatically be removed from the model. The results obtained was presented in table 8:

**Table 8: Competence development on Employee commitment (step wise regression)**

Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.456 <sup>a</sup>	.208	.205	.66546	.208	66.110	.000
2	.631 <sup>b</sup>	.398	.393	.58128	.190	79.271	.000
3	.660 <sup>c</sup>	.435	.429	.56402	.037	16.596	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), competence development

b. Predictors: (Constant), competence development, perceived organizational support

c. Predictors: (Constant), competence development, perceived organizational support, competence development\*Perceived Organization Support

The standard elements of a step-wise regression output is shown in table 8 with 3 models. In model 1, the control variables were removed since it was found that they only contributed less than 2 % of variance in employee commitment as seen in table 7 (weakest). This first model consists of the constant and the predictor variable, competence development. Statistics in table 8 indicated that the  $R^2$  for model 1 was 0.208, suggesting that at this point, competence development could explain 20.8 per cent of variance in employee

commitment. With a  $p < 0.01$ , this model was found to be significant at 99 per cent confidence level. In addition, the ANOVA statistic also indicated that the model was significant at F significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.01, hence indicating that this model was fit and applicable.

Further, model 2 added POS variable to model 1. This increased the influence on employee commitment to 39.8 per cent, an increase of 19.0 per cent in variance to the predicted variable. The p value was also established at 0.000 which was less than 0.01. Thus, model 2 was found to be significant and applicable since the ANOVA statistic obtained was also significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, model 3 was obtained by adding the product of competence development and POS (interaction term competence development \* perceived organization support) on to model 2 variables. This operation increased the  $R^2$  value with 0.037 units (3.7 per cent) to 0.453. This implied that jointly, model 3 variables could predict 43.5 per cent of variance in the dependent variable (employee commitment). Likewise, this model was significant at p value  $< 0.01$  while the ANOVA statistic indicated that the model was fit and applicable.

Nevertheless, step-wise regression does multiple regressions severally and at each time removes the weakest correlated variable (Saunders, Lewis & Thormhill, 2014). Thus, from the output in table 9, all control variables were removed. Consequently, the three variables were dropped and step-wise analysis repeated. Consistently, the results achieved were similar to those that were obtained earlier in table 8. On the overall, POS was found to have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment. This was also presented in the unstandardized coefficient table 9:

**Table 9: Unstandardized Coefficients for Step wise Regression**

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>		t	Sig.
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	2.539	.180	14.096	.000
	Competence development	.419	.052	8.131	.000
	(Constant)	1.624	.188	8.639	.000
2	Competence development	.206	.051	4.036	.000
	Perceived Organizational support	.441	.050	8.903	.000
	(Constant)	-.544	.562	-.967	.335
3	Competence development	.879	.173	5.095	.000
	Perceived Organizational support	1.048	.156	6.698	.000
	Competence development *perceived Organization Support	-.184	.045	-1.226	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

The Unstandardized regression coefficients  $\beta$  values of the computed (composite index) scores of competence development and employee commitment, when moderated with POS as presented in model 3 were 0.879 (competence development), 1.048 (POS), and -0.184 (competence development \*organizational support), with a t-test values of 5.095 (competence development), 6.698 (POS), and -4.074(competence development \* organizational support). All the t-values were above +1.96 and below -1.96 and the p values for all the variables in table 10 were less than 0.01. Hence, all variables in model 3 indicated a significant relationship at 99 per cent confidence level. Thus, model 3 in table 9 showed that POS had a significant moderating influence on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment. Having achieved the objective, the study rejected the null hypothesis that:  $H_0$ : perceived organization support has no moderating significant influence on the relationship between competence development and employee commitment.

From the same results in table 8, the revised model based on the step-wise regression analysis when POS was used as a moderator between competence development (predictor variable) and employee commitment (predicted variable) was obtained. The regression model obtained from the step-wise regression coefficients in table 9 can be stated as shown:

$$Y = -0.544 + 0.874X_1 + 1.048Z - 0.184X_1 * Z$$

or

Employee Commitment (predicted) = -0.544 + 0.874 competence development + 1.048 perceived organizational support - 0.184 competence development \* perceived organizational support

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