

# CONCEPTUAL APPLICATION OF ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT IN THE UNIVERSITIES

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper presents in-depth review of previous literature focused on organizational climate and organizational commitment. The paper also focused on the conceptual application of organisational climate and organisational commitment in the universities. An argument is put forward that there is a causal link between good organizational climate and commitment in an organization. Various conceptual principles of organizational climate and organizational commitment are reviewed to provide an explanation of the linkage between these variables. This paper also attempted to differentiate between the organizational climate and organizational culture. The research also addressed the teachers/employees' and university/organizations' needs and expectation from each other in the aspect of organizational climate and commitment. The conceptual knowledge and its principles were applied to the university set up considering the management officials, students and teachers as the part of the university. Thus, by exploring the recent literature, this paper provides a critical review about the role of organizational climate, and therefore, enhances further knowledge and understanding of commitment of the teachers.*

**Keywords:** *Organizational climate, Organizational culture, Organizational commitment, Teachers & University.*

## INTRODUCTION

### Context

In today's competitive business environment, it is a challenge for every organization to survive. There is no way out for any organization but to face the challenges posed by business environment as well as the challenges existing within the organization.

External as well as internal environment of any organization affects its performance. Business environment cannot be controlled by any organization, but internal environment within the

organization can certainly be controlled. Now, a major question is to understand the concept of organizational climate. There are two confusing terms: organizational culture and organizational climate. Before discussing the organizational climate, a researcher would like to review and discuss the previous researches differentiating between the two.

### Justification and Significance of the Research

According to Permarupan, P. et al. (2013), the concept of organizational climate is strongly concentrating on human capital, which is an integral

part of any organization and its management process. In today's business world, the end result involves employees in various roles be it as an employer, employee, or customer. Human beings are highly associated with emotion and intelligence. Therefore, the requirement to fulfill human need hierarchy is rather an important aspect especially on satisfaction and motivation. At this moment of time, the focus area will be the working environments attitude and values. Permarupan, P. et al (2013), further argued that a nation with the right employee mindset provides an integrated relationship to the economic growth of the said nation. This gives the opportunity to understand the precisely organizational climate's impact on organizational commitment. This is vital to create a balance strike between both parties as in the employer and employee. No matter how much technology has made our lifestyle more comfortable, the function of an organization is heavily supported by human capital involvement. Organizational climate here will be the support rendered by the employer for the comfort of employees, and Organizational Commitment will evaluate the value system of the employee indirectly. The success and growth of an organization requires a good set of human capital. In order to have the best human capital with the organization and retaining the current performing human capital, organization today are out doing each other to provide the most excellent remuneration with tremendous career growth. (Permarupan, P. et al., 'Organizational Climate on Employees' Work Passion: A Review', Canadian Social Science, [Vol. 9, No. 4](#), July 1, 2013)

### **Research Question**

1. What is the difference between organisational culture and organisational climate?
2. What are the factors that constitute organisational climate?
3. What is the concept of organisational commitment?

4. What are the findings of previous researches on the organisational climate and organisational commitment?
5. Can the concept of organisational commitment and organisational climate be applied in Universities?

### **Research Objectives**

**Research Objective-1:** To study and differentiate between organisational culture and organisational climate.

**Research Objective-2:** To study the concept of organisational climate.

**Research Objective-3:** To study the concept of organisational commitment.

**Research Objective-4:** To apply the concept of organisational commitment and organisational climate in Universities.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Organisational Culture v/s Organisational Climate**

**Trice and Beyer (1993)** define culture in terms of what it is not. It is not climate, which is measured with researcher-based data, whereas culture is measured by intense data collection of an emic (contrastive) nature. It is reflecting the concerns of both the researchers **Schneider (1990) and Glick (1985)**. **Trice and Beyer (1993)** states many different variables have been subsumed under the climate concept by several researchers that it overlaps with most constructs in organisational behaviour as well as with structure, technology, formalisation and effectiveness. **Denison (1996)** took what he considered to be a more controversial view in arguing that it is not clear that culture and climate are examining distinct organisational phenomena. The table-1 gives a summary of differences between Organisational Culture and Climate.

**Table-1: Differences between Organisational Culture and Climate**

<b>Research Perspective</b>	<b>Cultural Literature</b>	<b>Climate Literature</b>
Epistemological	Contextualised and idiographic	Comparative and homothetic
View point	Emic (native view)	Etic (Researcher's view)
Methodological	Qualitative observation	Quantitative observation
Temporal Orientation	Historical evolution	A historical snapshot
Level of Analysis	Underlying values and assumptions	Surface level manifestations
Discipline	Sociology	Psychology

**Source: Denison, 1996.**

**Denison, (1996)**, explained that culture researchers were more concerned with the evolution of social systems over time; whereas climate researchers were generally less concerned with evolution but more concerned with the impact that organisational systems have on groups and individuals. Culture researchers argued for the importance of deep underlying assumptions. Climate researchers in contrast, typically placed greater emphasis on organisational members' perceptions of observable practices and procedures that are closer to the surface of organisational life and categorization of these practices and perceptions into analytic dimensions defined by the researcher (Denison 1996). Denison concludes that although the two concepts on the surface look very different, at a deeper level the clear distinctions begin to disappear. With the psychological climate, the climate and the culture definitions and measures are confounded or overlapping. Climate seems to be a feature of, rather than a substitute for culture. That is, a comprehensive view of culture includes the organisational climate. It is obvious that measures and dimensions of organisational climate and organisational culture can be very confusing. (**Singh, R.R. et al., 2011**) Changing the culture of an organisation takes the full commitment of every leader within the organisation. You cannot just tell

people, "From now on it's going to be done this way." On the other hand, climate is a feeling by the employees on how they perceive that something should be done at the minute. These feelings can normally be changed within perhaps a few hours, days or weeks. The workers get these feelings from their both leaders and peers, formally and informally. Feelings are transmitted to them by how their leaders act and model, and what they praise and ignore. (<http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/culture.html>)

As it is clear that culture and climate are examining distinct organisational phenomena and above review of literature gave us insight about difference between the two; hence, it can be said that our **Research Objective-1 is fulfilled.**

## ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

The most common issue faced by management organization is the quest for a creative adaptable work environment that promotes job contentment and discovery. Being drained by monetary constraint, downsizing, and outsourcing requires organization to change dynamics in the workforce that is accommodating.

Organisational climate is comprised of mixture of norms, values, expectations, policies, procedures that influence work motivation, commitment, and ultimately, individual and work-unit performance. Positive climates encourage, while negative climates inhibit discretionary effort. 'Organisational climate' refers to the quality of working environment. If people feel that they are valued and respected within organisation, they are more likely to participate positively to the achievement of business outcomes. Creating a 'healthy' organizational climate requires attention to the factors which influence employees' thoughts including the quality of leadership, the way in which conclusions are made and whether the efforts of employees are recognised. **Forehand and Von Gilmer (1964)** One of the earliest definitions of organizational climate is – "organizational climate is comprised of qualities that discriminate one firm from another, that endure over time, and help to control actions of employees within the organization." He also defined climate as set of characteristics or attributes through which an organization can be recognized. **Tagiuri and Litwin(1968)** Subsequent research build upon Forehand and Von Gilmer by adding the notion that climate should be described as the set of qualities that encompass the organization of inquiry.

According to **Bowen &Ostroff(2004)**, "Organizational climate is a shared opinion of what the organization is, like in terms of practices, theories, methods, systems, and rewards. What is important and what behaviors are expected and rewarded- and is based on shared perceptions among employees within formal organizational units." Bowen &Ostroffalsosaid that organizational climate is a bridge that links HRM and performance.

**Rekha Nair (2006)** in her study noted the increasing importance of workplace climate on employee job satisfaction, creativity, motivation and retention. Because of the importance of workplace climate, IBM made adjustments and set best practices which in turn have helped the organization to stay on top.

**Patterson et al., (2004)**, concluded that in between organizational climate and company

performance, employee plays an important role because employee's job satisfaction is highlighted as the mediator between organizational climate and company performance. Organizational climate has been proven to influence employee's behavior such as participation, absenteeism level of stress and work commitment (**Rose, 2002, 2004**).

The top agenda of every organization should be the development of employee performance. Fostering a supportive environment and a positive workforce climate is vital for any business.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In one of the research by **Taymaz (2003)**, it was concluded that organization climate is a key factor that increases the effectiveness and efficiency of school, and many researchers studying schools found effective schools have positive organizational climate.

Based on the same schooling background, open communication and sincere relationship create positive organizational climate, which means mutual sincerity, trust and respect (**Ozden, 2004**).

The task of creating and maintaining an organizational climate lies in the management leader, whose managerial behavior impacts the organizational climate (**Tuna, 1996**).

## ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND LEADERSHIP

According to several researches, "Climate for an organisation is somewhat like the personality for a person. Just as every individual has a personality that makes each person unique, each organisation has an organisational climate that clearly distinguishes its personality from other organisations."

Climate is regarded as an attribute of the organization, a conglomerate of attitudes, feelings

an behaviours which characterize life in an organization, end exist independently of the perception and understanding of the members of the organization. This concept of climate implies that there is a certain degree of, say, trust and openness between the members, of commitment and motivation or risk taking mentality etc., climate is conceived as an organisational reality in an "objectivist" sense.

The leadership style highly influences the execution and satisfaction degree of the organization members and a change in the leadership style impacts the climate significantly (Aydin, 1993).

**Baumgartel (1971)** viewed organizational climate as a product of leadership practices, communication practices and enduring and systematic characteristics of the working relationships among persons and division of any particular organization.

**Hellhreigal and Slocum (1974)** define organizational climate as set of attributes which can be perceived about a particular organization and or its sub-systems and which may be induced from the way that organization deals with its members.

**Moran and Volkwein (1992)** Organisational climate is defined as the shared perceptions, feelings and Attitudes that organisational members have about the fundamental elements of the organisation, which reflect the established norms, values and attitudes of the organisation's culture and influences individuals' behaviour positively or negatively.

Beyond this, several researchers have proposed other definitions that place more weight on the environment, including things such as guidelines, actions, and the atmospherics (Argyris, 1957; Schein, 1992), while another group insists that leader and manager behavior are most important (Fleishman, 1953; McGregor, 1960). Moreover, another group of researchers focus on measurable outcomes (Forehand, 1964).

Organizational climate is made up of perceived organizational properties intervening

between organizational characteristics and behavior (Friedlander & Margulies, 1969).

Organizational climate is a set of attitudes and expectations describing the organization's static characteristics and behavior outcome and outcome contingencies (Campbell, et al., 1970).

Individual perceptions of their organization are affected by characteristics of the organization and the individual (Schneider, B. and Bowen, D.E., 1985).

## ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND PSYCHOLOGY

Psychologically meaningful cognitive representations of the situation perceptions (James & Jones, 1974). Perceptions or interpretations of meaning which help individuals make sense of the world and know how to behave (Schneider & Snyder, 1975). Individuals' cognitive representation of proximal environments... expressed in terms of psychological meaning and significance to the individual, an attribute of the individual, which is learned, historical and resistant to change (James, L.R. et al., 1990). An assessed molar perception or an inference researchers make based on more particular perceptions (Schneider & Reichers, 1983). ('Organizational Climate') A generic term from a broad class of organizational, rather than psychological, variables that describe the context for individual's actions (Glick, 1985). Organizational Climate is a concept reflecting the content and strength of the prevalent values, norms, attitudes, behaviors and feelings of the people in an organization (McNabb & Sepic, 1995). As can be seen above, researchers attempt to permit the definition of organizational climate to be taken out of the context of inquiry. While it is complicated to propose an all purpose definition, it is possible to draw up the boundaries of the concept by ascribing to it certain characteristics.

**Tagiuri, et al. (1968)** identified several aspects of climate that help to clarify the domain of the concept. "Climate is a molar, synthetic concept (like personality). Climate is a particular

configuration of situational variables. Its component elements may vary, however, while the climate may remain the same. It is the meaning of an enduring situational configuration. Climate has continuity, but not as lasting as culture. Climate is determined importantly by characteristics, conduct, attitudes, expectations of other persons, and by sociological and cultural realities.

Climate is phenomenologically external to the actor who may, however, feel that he contributes to its nature. Climate is phenomenologically distinct from the task for both observer and actor. It is in the actor's or observer's head, though not necessarily in a conscious form, but it is based on characteristics of external reality. It is capable of being shared (as consensus) by several people in the situation, and it is interpreted in terms of shared meanings (with some individual variation around a consensus). It cannot be a simple delusion since it must be based on external reality. It may or may not be able of description in words, although it may be capable of specification in terms of response. It has potential behavioral consequences. It is an indirect determinant behaviour in that it acts upon attitudes, expectations, and states of arousal, which are direct determinants of behavior".

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE

Researchers agree that Climate is a bunch of all those attribute which define and differentiate an organization from another. These characteristics of organizational climate are cited below:

- Climate can change over time.
- It is perceived by individual members of the organization.
- It is shared by all the organizational members.
- It forms the impressions of the organization.
- Members help form impression through interacting with each other, organizational policies, structures and processes.

- Climate perceptions are descriptions of environmental events and conditions rather than evaluations of them.
- The climate construct is multidimensional.
- It refers to the 'feeling of an organisation'.
- Climate can potentially influence an individual's behaviour.

From the above review of literature, it is evident that organizational climate is a lengthy process in which an organization operates. Climate affects employees' motivation and a good working climate increases employee spirit, dedication and productivity and decreases turnover. Hence, it can be said that our **Research Objective-2 is fulfilled.**

## ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Most times, organizational commitment has been seen as an interesting subject due to its ability to help organization to predict job performance, turnover and absenteeism of employees more than job performances or job satisfaction. Organizational commitment occurs when an employee is involved or identifies one with the organization. The bond or linking that employee has with his/her organization is called organizational commitment (**Lambert & Paoline, 2008; Mathieu et al., 1990**).

Organizational commitment is multidimensional and it is an outcome of one's evaluation of his/her work place (**Normala, 2010**).

Organizational commitment acts as a variable and provides useful information regarding planning, organizing, increasing, performance and reducing absences for managers. Employees who are committed to an organization will see themselves a part of the organization and remain loyal to it (**Asgari et al., 2011**). Most research focuses mainly on antecedents and consequences.

**Meyer and Allen (1991)** hold that organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct comprising three components: affective, continuance and normative. **Allen and Meyer (1990)** have identified three types of OC which are:

- **Affective,**
- **Continuance, and**
- **Normative.**

**Affective commitment** has been defined as an employee's emotional attachment to identification with an involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment will remain in the organization because they want to.

**Continuance commitment** relates to one's awareness of the costs associated with leaving the present organization. Employees whose commitment is in the nature of continuance will remain in the organization because they have to.

**Normative commitment** has to do with feeling of obligations to the organization based on one's personal norms and values. Employees whose commitment to the organization is said to be of the normative type remains in the organization simply because they believe they ought to.

The factors structures of **Allen and Meyer's (1996)** organizational commitment scale have been examined in several studies. Some of these studies include measures from all the three components (affective, continuance, and normative) whilst others focus only on affective measure and/or continuance commitment measure.

Most public organizational studies indicates the existence of affective and continuance commitment (**Kalbers and Fogarty, 1995; Ketchand and Strawser, 2001**). But however, only affective commitment has shown consistent relationship with desirable organizational outcomes and negative correlation with turnover intentions among those three types of OC (**Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005**).

Most of the research on antecedent of OC were oriented to job characteristic and work experience on various variables like work design, job challenge, autonomy, skills and feedback on task (**Bamber and Iyer 2002; Dunham et al., 1994**), and decisionmaking participation and support from management (**Zaffane, 1994**).

Organizational tenure is always positively associated with organizational commitment, this is because of the general assumption that the longer time they are with a company the more benefits they get. It is very important to have committed employees for the existences both for private and public sectors; it is a both basic activity and final aim for organization to survive. This is because; individuals who are organizationally committed are more adaptable, more productive, work in sense of responsibility and lead to less cost in organization (**Demir, 2012**)

- Committed employees will remain in the organization compared to non-committed employees. But lack of alternatives can lead weak affective and normative commitment into a strong continuance commitment (**Ceylan & Bayram, 2006**)
- Organizational commitment is that employees continue to remain in the organization whenever they feel positive or negative (**Ozdevecioglu, 2003**).
- Organizational commitment is used to explain two deferring concepts which is attitudinal and behavioral.
- Engagement of oneself with the organization is reasoned by organizational commitment.
- Organizational Commitment itself carries a heavy impact of someone's devotion, responsibility and loyalty to a task or an organization.
- In other words, Organizational commitment is defined as the strength of an individual's identification with the goals of an organization.

From the aforementioned review of literature, organizational commitment occurs when an employee is involved or identifies one with the organization. It is also clear that organizational commitment provides information regarding planning, organizing, increasing, performance and

reducing absences for employees/teachers. Hence, it can be said that our **Research Objective-3 is fulfilled.**

## ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Employee surveys are one of the most common forms of data collection used by researchers and practitioners. Such surveys are used widely for describing the nature of an organization, assessing how well an organization is performing, benchmarking organizational performance against other organizations, and estimating the potential causal relationships between work practices and outcomes (Kraut, 2006).

Organizational climate may be defined as “the shared perceptions of organizational policies, practices, and procedures” (Reichers & Schneider, 1990), and indicates what the individuals require to gain from their workplace.

Organizational climate can be determined by the perceptions individuals have of their workplaces, as reflected by personal values and psychological desires (James L.R. et al., 1990; McMurray et al., 2010).

Basically, Organizational climate (sometimes known as Corporate Climate) is the process of quantifying the “culture” of an organization; it precedes the notion of organizational culture. It is a set of properties of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by the employees, that is assumed to be a major force in influencing employee behavior. This shared perception which exhibit emotionally relevant cognition is linked to employees’ reaction towards the organization and influences their affective organizational commitment (James et al., 2008; Parker et al., 2003).

OC together with how well an individual is connected and the level of involvement in an organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1979; Porter et al.,

1974), has been identified as having a positive relationship with organizational citizenship behavior and job performance and is negatively related to absenteeism and turnover (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005).

It is important in understanding OC, theoretically and practically because it has the most significant effect on organizational and individual performance of all work-related dispositional variables (Yang & Pandey, 2009).

Dunham (1984) stated that every attitude could be understood better by recognizing that every attitude has three distinct components, which are cognitive, affective and behavioral tendencies.

Personality traits or dispositions are receiving increased attention as antecedents of work-related attitudes. Employees with positive affect are more likely to have positive attitudes to themselves and others, and tend to have an overall sense of well-being, whereas those with negative affect tend to feel anxious and tense.

Work has various definitions differing from science terms to art or management terms. Generally work is understood as a task or act done or performed by individual to ensure completion of a certain processor cycle of responsibility being entrusted with. Behavior plays an important role in our very action. Therefore, it is timely to investigate the external factors as in Employer’s role in providing the required Organizational Climate as per discussed by Hay group. With the element being taken care of, the behavior of the employee is to be evaluated by their work passion towards their given task and role in an organization. Developing the right behavior may stipulate the right attitude as in organizational commitment. Treating your organizational with utmost respect ensure growth for both components indeed. The right organizational climate creates the passion and this is required to see the impact of the commitment level to the organizational well-being.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### **Organizational Climate and Organizational Commitment: Application of the concept in the Universities.**

#### **University Climate**

After reviewing the previous research studies, researcher found that organisational climate consists of the relationship between all the human resources working in the university including students, teachers, staff, senior management officials and every person working in the university; it also involves the process and the quality of inter group / intra group, interpersonal communication and interaction. **Human Relations Autonomy** is the main dimension that includes-

#### **Autonomy & Integration**

**This dimension of** university climate can be measured by the following point of Autonomy & Integration-

- Management trust people / teachers to take work-related decisions without getting permission first.
- Management keeps too tight a reign on the way things are done around here.
- It is important to check things first with the senior management before taking a decision.
- There is very little conflict between departments here.
- People in different departments of the university are prepared to share information.
- Collaboration between departments is very effective.

**Involvement in decision making & Management Support** in the universities can be evaluated on the basis of following two major aspects-

- Management involve people/teachers when decisions are made that affect them.
- Management is responsive and reliable and can be relied upon for guidance.

**Internal Process** is the another main dimension that includes **Formalization & Tradition**; which in case of universities can be evaluated on the basis of following important aspects of Formalization & Tradition-

- Management gets too upset if teachers break the rules around here.
- Ways of improving service to the students are not given much thought.
- Students' needs are not considered top priority here.
- This university is continually looking for new opportunities to be the best.
- In this university, the way teachers work together is readily changed in order to improve performance.
- There are regular discussions as to whether people/teachers in the university are working effectively together.

**Rational Goal** in the universities can be evaluated on the basis of following two major aspects-

First are the **Clarity of Organizational Goals, Efficiency and Effort**, that can be measured by observing whether the teachers are prepared to make a special effort to do a good job or not. And the second important dimension is **Performance Feedback, Pressure to Produce & Quality**, that can be evaluated on the basis of following points-

- Teachers usually receive feedback on the quality of work they have done.
- Teachers' performance is measured on a regular basis.
- Quality is taken very seriously here.
- Teachers believe the university's success depends on high-quality work.
- This university does not have much of a reputation for top-quality on national or international level.

**These aforementioned 20 items belong to five dimensions of University Climate as described by Malcolm G. Patterson, et al., (2005).**

### **Organisational Commitment**

Meyer and Allen (1991) described organizational commitment as a multidimensional construct comprising three components: affective, continuance and normative. Researcher tried to apply the concept of Allen and Meyer (1990) in the university set up; and researcher identified following major aspects of measuring organizational commitment on the basis of three types of organizational commitment which are:

#### **Affective Commitment**

- I am very happy being a teacher of this university.
- I don't want to spend the rest of my career with this university.
- I enjoy discussing about my university with people outside it.
- I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my university.
- I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this university.
- I feel a 'strong' sense of belonging to my university.

#### **Continuance Commitment**

- I never worry about what might happen if I have to leave this university permanently.
- I am loyal to this university because I have invested a lot in it, emotionally, socially, and economically.
- Right now, staying with my university is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
- One of the major reasons I continue to work for this university is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice—another university may not match the overall benefits I have here.

#### **Normative Commitment**

- I feel that I owe this university quite a bit because of what it has done for me.
- My university does not deserve my loyalty because of its treatment towards me.
- I am loyal to this university because we both have similar values.
- This university has a mission that I don't believe in and am not committed to.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is not an easy task for management and university / organization to design and adapt organizational climate effectively without the support and dedication from teachers / employees themselves. However, management and university / organization can plan and design the best-fit approach to remain valid to all involved parties especially the teachers and the students.

It is not just the monetary based benefits that motivates and enhances teachers' job involvement and job satisfaction but the university climate and the affective commitment such as opportunities at work also play role.

This paper addressed the teachers' needs and expectation from the management of the university / organization / employer. As we are aware, an organization requires teachers / human capital to meet its goal and objectives, therefore, by understanding the concept of university / organizational Climate, the overall satisfaction level of the teachers and other employees can be improved. This is going to enhance teachers / employee's work passion as well as organizational commitment also. An excellent university will enable an enhanced economic development. Now, there is a scope for the comparison between the practices between public and privately administrative universities. It is believed that, if the above mentioned points are paid attention by the university / employer, then the teachers will

probably have a high work passion towards they're given task or job.

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