

**ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE DIMENSIONS AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT: EXPLORING THEIR  
COMPLEMENTARITY NEXUS IN A NIGERIAN MANUFACTURING FIRM**

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**Abstract**

*This study explored the imperative dimensions of the relationship between organisational climate and affective employee commitment in a purposively selected manufacturing firm in foods and personal care products trade group in Lagos, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The participants in the study were 385 employees selected through stratified random sampling technique. Situational Outlook Assessment (SOA) questionnaire was the basic instrument used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypothesis for the study was tested using correlation coefficient statistical analysis at 0.05 level of significance. Results of the study revealed statistically significant correlations between organizational climate dimensions and affective employee commitment. The one exception was the organizational climate dimension of conflicts. This suggested that if anything, there was causal linkage between most of the components of organizational climate and employee commitment. Our analysis, thus led to the conclusion that a positive and warm working environment served as a strong catalyst for encouraging and stimulating the commitment of employees in the Nigerian manufacturing organisation.*

**Keywords:** Employee Commitment, Organizational Climate Dimensions, Performance, Productivity and Work-environment.

**Introduction**

In today's competitive and fast changing business environment, manufacturing organisations are facing new challenges regarding sustained productivity and building committed workforce. Factors found to be responsible for these challenges include organisational design and culture (Noordin, Omar, Sehan and Idrus, 2010), shared perception of the informal and formal policies, rules and discipline in organizations (Guy, 2008) and counterproductive work behaviours (Dalal, 2005). These factors have persistently forced management to strive for exploiting the resources at their disposal. Among these, human resources are decisive, because other resources are directly generated through them (Titu and Balan, 2009). As a result, organisations see their employees as a critical source of competitive advantage (Gottoschalk & Zollo, 2007)

and consider them as valuable sources of performance (Zheng, Morrison & O'Neil, 2006). However, the extent to which employees are active and productive enough to give their best performance and use discretionary effort in their organisations often depend on the climate of the work-environment and how they are convinced that their personal aspirations are aligned with the organisational goals.

According to Haakonsson, Burton, Obel & Laurideen (2008), organisational climate refers to affective events that influence employee's emotion and consequent information processing behaviours. As an index of organizational effectiveness, it can be helpful in the fulfillment of committed goals of both the individual employee and the organization. To this end, building a favourable organisational climate by management

serves as the catalyst for encouraging and stimulating employee commitment. Without employee commitment, there may not be improvement in any area of an organisation's business activity. As Nawab and Bhalti (2011) pointed out, committed employees are usually contributors and performers toward enhancing organisational productivity. Ideally, employee commitment sometimes synonymously called organisational commitment is seen as the individual's mental connection with his/her work and the organisation as well (Riad, Labib and Nawar, 2016). The organisation's success is thus dependent on employees' loyalty and willingness to do more than what is specified in their official job description.

Ayinde (2011) contended that commitment in Nigerian organisations nowadays has become a contentious issue owing to the fact that many establishments can neither guarantee job security nor pay workers' fringe benefits and gratuity and this has tendency to affect employee commitment. These problems have in fact been compounded by the recent economic downturn in Nigeria, which affected many work-organisations. Various extrinsic cost-reductions and survival strategies have been evolved by management which implicated employee commitment. As such, building instrumental bonds in terms of extrinsic factors may no longer encourage the commitment of employees in most Nigerian organisations. Moreso, when it has become apparent, that many extrinsic factors which encouraged employee commitment in the past have now disappeared with the emergence of downturn in the Nigerian economy. This scenario has compelled management to look inwards on intrinsic factor like organisational climate in order to promote employee commitment.

Empirical studies have indicated that there exist some significant relationships between the dimensions of organisational climate and employee

commitment (Marpaung & Anindita, 2017, Riad, Labib., & Nawar, 2016., Tanriverdi & Altindag, 2014., and Noordin, Omar, Sehan & Idrus, 2010.). Most, if not all, of these prior studies have been carried out from socio-cultural settings different from that of Nigerian organisations. Moreover, social cultural norms often influence the outcome of findings in differing locations and circumstances. More importantly, ambiguities still exist on the linkage between the dimensions of organizational climate and the employee commitment in some of these studies. Therefore, this present study attempts to redress this situation and also aims to unravel dimensions of organisational climate leading to employee commitment in Nigerian organisations.

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of Organisational Climate**

The term Organisational climate has been defined in numerous ways by different scholars and researchers (Jyoti, 2013., Ivancevith, Konopaske, & Mattenson, 2008., McMurray, Scott & Wayne 2004., Allen, 2003., Glission, & James, 2002). Danish, Draz and Ali, (2015) defined organisational climate as the working condition which consisted of the organisation and the relationship with others in doing their job. This definition makes the concept irreproachable for management to understand the strategic and central position which organisational climate occupies in influencing work attitudes and behaviours in organisations. It is used to describe events, experiences and represents the pattern of behaviours of employees. In other words, organisational climate is a descriptive construct that reflects consensual agreement among organisational members regarding the key elements of the organisation in terms of its systems, practices and leadership styles (McMurray, Scot & Wayne, 2003).

Like many behavioural concepts it is evident that there is still no unitary and universally accepted definition of

organisational climate. However, researchers and scholars have agreed on certain and essential attributes of the construct that differentiate it from other concepts that influence employee work behaviours in organisations. Among them are that;. Its perceptions are descriptive of environmental events and conditions rather than evaluation of them and can change overtime. It is made up of varying modes of integration of organisational and personal goals which vary from one organization to another and possessed specific democratic function with appropriate authorities for participation (Landy & Conte, 2010). As a multi-dimensional concept, there is also a consensual agreement that organisational climate has a number of typical dimensions which include culture, communication, leadership, teamwork, decision making, organisational design, job satisfaction and innovation. (Noordin, Omar, Sehan & Idrus, 2010 and Armstrong, 2009). Others are challenges and involvement, freedom, idea support, playness and humour, debate, trust and openness, idea time, risk taking and conflict (Igbal, 2008). Some of these identified components of organizational climate will be investigated in this study.

### **Concept of Employee Commitment**

Multiple definitions of employee commitment are found in the literature (Lamba and Choudhary, 2013., Isai, Isai and Wang, 2011., Solinger, Ollfem & Roe, 2008., Riketta, 2002., and Northcraft & Neale, 1996). Operationally, Meyer & Allen, (1997) defined employee commitment as the psychological state that binds the individual employee to the organisation. This definition delineates commitment as an attachment rather than a force. It also distinguishes commitment from its antecedent and places it within recognition of how the individual scan make use of it in their work place environment.

As such, employee commitment does make a real difference in organisations.

Not only does it improves the performance of an organisation, it also makes it to become a better place to work. Within this context commitment has to do with employees' indepth feelings and behaviours toward his/her job. This suggests that employee commitment is concerned with the extent to which an organisational member is loyal and willing to contribute to the organisation (Isai, Isai & Wang, 2011),

Employee commitment in organisations could manifest in three ways: Affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen 1991). Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation. Affective bonds engender ties since they are associated with the organisational goals and values. As such, management in organisation can build affective commitment by providing open communication, access to information and allowing employees to participate in decision making (Suma & Leshaw, 2013). Continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation. It also develops as a function of lack of alternative employment opportunities. Employees whose primary link to the organisation is based on continuance commitment remains because they need to do so (Noordin, Omar, Sehan & Idrus, 2010). Normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment and a generalised value of loyalty and duty to the employing organisation. Currently, researchers have focused mostly on affective commitment in organisations (Solinger & Ollfem, 2008) since it overlaps with both normative and continuance commitment and is considered to be the most researched component due to the benefit associated with it (Newman & Sheik, 2012). The normative commitment is a relatively new aspect of employee commitment. For these reasons, this present study focused on

the single facet of affective employee commitment.

### **Organisational Climate and Employee Commitment**

Researchers have studied the construct of organisational climate extensively and has proven to be useful in capturing the perception of employee work attitudes and behaviours particularly employee commitment in organisations (Permarupan & Yuthamarani, 2013., Daeseok, Jim, & Hayem, 2011, Glission & James, 2002). Specifically, Decottis and Summer (1987) found that all dimensions of organisational climate were positive, having significant relationship with employee commitment. Similarly, study conducted by Ekvall (1997) also indicated that organisational climate is an important variable and has been found to be positively correlated with employee commitment. Likewise, Laschinger, Finegan & Shamian (2001) investigated the impact of workplace empowerment and organisational climate on work satisfaction and commitment and found a positive relationship between the variables of organisational climate and employee commitment.

However, shift in empirical studies from the two constructs as a whole, rather than their identified dimensions and facets have shown some inconsistencies and ambiguities. Studies conducted by Mc Murray., Scott & Wayne, (2004)., and Noordin, Omar, Sehan & Idrus, (2010) established that there are significant relationships between all dimensions of organisational climate and the three-facets of employee commitment (affective, continuance and normative). Conversely, Igbal (2008) studied nine dimensions of organisational climate (challenge and involvement, freedom, idea support, playness and humour, debate, trust and openness, idea time, risk taking and conflict) and one facet of employment commitment (affective or attitudinal Commitment) in a Pakistan Knitwear Industry. Findings found that out of

nine-dimensions of organisational climate, only six were positive and having significant statistically determinate relationship with affective employee commitment. However, a strong negative but significant correlation was found between dimensions of organisational climate (conflict), while there was no significant relationship between idea time and risk taking dimensions of organisational climate and affective employee commitment. Paradoxically, Igbal's (2008) study did not find any significant relationship between organisational climate and employee commitment as a metaphor. Recent empirical studies carried out by Marpaung & Anindita, (2017) and Riad, Labib, & Nawar, (2016) found a significant relationship between all identified dimensions of organisational climate and employee commitment. Thus, these studies revealed that the dimensions of organisational climate had a greater influence on employee commitment than organisational climate as a whole.

Consequently and to a very large extent, there now appears to be diverse findings regarding the relationship between various dimensions of organisational climate and facets of employee commitment. Furthermore, the empirical studies showed that few researches or rather none have been conducted in Nigeria especially in the manufacturing industry. In this way, empirical studies have been grossly underscored in most of the existing literature reviewed. Hence, this present study has been designed to provide the necessary lacuna.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the imperative dimensions of the relationship between organizational climate and employee commitment in a Nigerian manufacturing firm. The essence is to determine the underlying mechanism by which the components of organisational climate exert influence on employee commitment

in the selected Nigerian manufacturing firm.

### **Study Hypothesis**

Based on the comprehensive review of the literature and objectives of the study, the main hypothesis formulated and tested for the study is as follows:

Ho: Organisational climate dimensions are not significantly related to affective employee commitment in the Nigerian manufacturing industry.

### **Research Method**

This study adopted a descriptive research design. The study location was Lagos, in which one of the highly intensive technological oriented manufacturing firms in the foods and personal care products trade group was purposively selected for data collection. Sample consisted of 385 respondents, selected through stratified random sampling technique. A questionnaire under the name Situational Outlook Assessment (SOA) was the basic instrument used for data collection. This questionnaire comprised two major parts: Organisational Climate and Employee Commitment items. The organisational climate survey questions were adapted from Stringer (2002) consisting of 18 questions grouped into nine (9) elements based on an established construct of organisation which include: communication, leadership style, organisation design, risk taking, decision-making, conflict, idea support and discipline. The employee commitment questions were adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990) and used 18 items for the measurement of affective commitment. Each of the respondent completed the self-administered questionnaire.

The reliability test of the questionnaire was carried out before distribution. The 18 item constructs of the organisational climate manifested a high internal consistency. The reliability estimates showed that these constructs have a

Cronbach's alpha value of 0.79 and a split-half reliability coefficient of 0.75 which can be regarded as quite reliable and good for this study. The affective commitment has 18-item constructs and the reliability estimates demonstrated that these constructs were internally consistent. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient and split-half reliability for the measure of affective commitment is 0.81 and 0.85 respectively which are adjudged as quite high for this study. The test-re-test reliability was further carried out and the result of 0.81 was obtained after three weeks interval of administration of the questionnaire on a sample of 25 employees from another manufacturing organisation. The responses to the survey were coded, entered into a data base and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20, software. Statistical test used included both descriptive and inferential types. The hypothesis for the study was tested using correlation coefficient statistical analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Results of the Study**

The demographic result showed that most of the respondents were within the age bracket of 35-44 years with a mean age of 37.2 years and standard deviation of 7.4 years. Majority, (68.4%) of the respondents were male, while the rest (31.6%) were female. On marital status, a significant majority (88.2%) were married while the rest (12.8%) were either single, separated or widowed. In terms of educational qualification, all the respondents had formal education with 52% of them, representing the majority, possessing polytechnic Higher National Diploma or University Degree. On the job rank, majority (49%) of the respondents were in the senior staff cadre, 38.5% of them were in junior rank, while the rest (12.5%) were management personnel. The employees' length of service indicates a mean of 8.1 years with standard deviation of 2.4 years and less than one-quarter, that is,

(23.6%) of the respondents have been holding the same position for an

average period of 3-5years.

**Table 1:** Mean Score Analysis and Standard Deviation of the dimensions of organizational climate and Affective and Employee Commitment.

S/N	Organisational Climate Components	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std Deviation	Std Error of Mean
1	Communication	385	1	5	4.12	.816	.266
2	Leadership style	385	1	5	4.03	.805	.266
3	Organisation design	385	1	5	3.76	.815	.266
4	Decision-making	385	1	5	3.26	.825	.266
5	Idea-support	385	1	5	3.03	.826	.270
6	Team work	385	1	5	3.01	.822	.270
7	Risk Taking	385	1	5	2.57	1.04	.276
8	Discipline	385	1	5	2.35	1.08	.296
9	Conflict	385	1	5	2.28	1.026	.776
<b>Organizational Climate Affective and Employee Commitment</b>							
1	Organisational Climate	385	1	5	3.17	.826	.276
2	Affective Commitment	385	1	5	3.35	.825	.266

Table 1 presents data on the response of employees on the perceived feelings of the components of organisational climate and affective commitment in the manufacturing organisation. The mean score values were derived from the 5-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with six (6) out of nine (9) indicators of organisational climate having mean score of >3. These indicators are communication (m=4.12, sd=.816), leadership style (m=4.03, sd=.805), organisation design (m=3.76, sd=.815), decision making (m=3.26, sd=.826), idea support (m=3.03, sd=.826) and Teamwork (m=3.01, sd=.826). A significant implication of these findings, is that there was commonality of strong dimensions of organisational climate indicating a perceived collective feelings of warmth working atmosphere and mutual support for the organization. Risk taking and discipline dimensions of organisational climate were above average, except the conflict dimension. Overall, the arithmetic total mean value for organisational climate is 3.17 denoting an open climate with a warm working environment. The mean score value of

affective employee commitment is 3.35 depicting strong indication of workforce shared, identification with and an emotional attachment to the organisation.

**Table 2:** Correlation Analysis between Organisational Climate Dimension and Affective Employee Commitment

Control variables	Organisational climate dimension	Affective Employee Commitment
Respondent job category	Communication	.651*
	Leadership style	.633*
	Organisation design	.610*
	Risk taking	.284*
	Decision-making	.512*
	Idea-support	.294*
	Discipline	-.512*
	Team work	.510*
	Conflict	.012

Note: \* P < 0.05 (significant result)

On examination from the data presented in Table 2, it was found that out of nine dimensions of organisational climate, eight were established as

positive, having statistically determinate relationship with affective employee commitment. Positive and strong correlation were found between affective employee commitment and organisational climate dimensions of communication ( $r=0.65$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), leadership style ( $r=0.63$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), organization design ( $r=0.61$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), decision making ( $r=0.51$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and teamwork= $0.51$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Positive but moderately strong correlation was observed for the dimensions of idea-support ( $r=0.29$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and risk taking ( $r=0.28$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Discipline dimension of organisational climate had a negative but strong correlation with affective employee commitment paradoxically, conflict dimensions of organisational climate was not significantly related to affective employee commitment in the organisation. In general, most of the identified components of organisational climate in this study were significantly related to affective employee commitment. On our hypothesis, the only discrepant finding is the conflict dimension. We can however safely state that organisational climate is significantly related to affective employee commitment in the selected manufacturing firm.

### Discussion of findings

This study aimed to explore the relationship between the components of organisational climate and affective employee commitment. Empirical findings revealed strong positive correlations between affective employee commitment and organisational climate dimensions of communication, leadership style, organisation design, decision-making and team work. Prior studies conducted by Noordin, Omar, Sehan, & Idrus, (2010)., Tanriverdi & Altindag, (2014)., and Riad, Labib & Nawar, (2016) had demonstrated that dimensions of organisational climate had greater influence on employee commitment than organisational climate as a whole. The correlations between most of the identified dimensions of organisational climate and employee

commitment were significantly and positively related in the selected manufacturing organisation. These findings mirrored the earlier results of Permarupan & Yuthamarani, (2013)., Laschinger, Finegan & Shamian, (2001), Decottis & Summers, (1987). The causal linkage effect of employee commitment helped in shaping the overall climate and providing specific democratic functioning with appropriate opportunities for the participation of the workforce in the affairs of the manufacturing organisation.

However, finding of this present study seemed to refute some of the previous results of the study of Igbal (2008) that risk-taking dimension of organisational climate showed no significance with employee commitment. Empirical evidence that emerged from our study clearly indicated to the contrary. The present study found that organisational climate dimension of risk-taking had a positively and moderately strong correlation with affective employee commitment. This goes to establish that some employees in the Nigerian manufacturing organisation still learn to identify, choose and work with acceptable risks.

Furthermore, this present study also found that conflict dimension of organisational climate was not significantly, related to employee commitment. This result deviated from the previous finding of Igbal (2008) who observed a strong negative but significant correlation between employee commitment and organisational climate dimension of conflict. This divergence in finding is understandably so, given the growing rate of incessant conflict in Nigerian organisations with the downturn in the nation's economy. In the absence of common values in work organisations, conflict is bound to occur which can implicate the commitment of employees.

### Conclusion

Based on the outcome of the findings, it was concluded that organisational climate has substantial causal linkage



with employee commitment. From the overall analysis, organisational climate dimensions correlated significantly with affective employee commitment. In addition, the study demonstrated clearly that the perception of the work-environment by employees often influences directly or indirectly the level of workforce commitment in organisations. The strength of relationship between organisational climate dimensions and affective employee commitment as figured in this study showed a strong empirical overlap. This interdependence makes organisational climate a catalyst for building and developing employee commitment in organisations.

### Recommendations

Cultivating a warm and favourable work-climate is one of the fundamental aspects of building a successful organisation and encouraging employee commitment. As such, a conducive organisational climate motivates the workforce to put in their best in achieving the organisational goals and objectives. Accordingly, an employee centered climate needs to be cultivated by management through guiding norms, values, expectations, policies and rules. These are to ensure employee emotional attachment to and identification with their employing organisation. Management must also strive for open discussion and engage in social dialogue to resolve conflict and avoid any form of confrontation with employees in order to enhance their commitment to work. Application of discipline must be didactic with consideration of flexibility and good organisational justice to promote cooperative, supportive and receptive attitudes to work.

### Study Limitations

However, it is important to note that this study is not without some limitations. First, is the restrictive nature of sample population to the manufacturing sector and the generalization of its properties which may be inadequate in producing robust

result. Second, is the sample size of the respondents, which is not large enough and also posed a threat to the generalisability of the findings of this study. As such, the study still opens a fresh challenge for future research. However, despite these limitations, the study has offered a good insight into the understanding of the relationship between organisational climate and employee commitment in the Nigerian manufacturing industry.

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