

## Perceived Institutional Climate and Faculties' Affective Commitment: Evidence from Ethiopian Higher Educational Institutions

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### Abstract

Organizational climate for an organization is equivalent for a person's personality. One of the most important factors for organizational goal achievement of any type is human resource working in different organizational climate. This research is then aimed at dealing the role of selected institutional climate dimensions in determining academicians' affective institutional commitment in the case of Wollo and Debre Berhan Universities and a total of 216 respondents were selected using stratified probability sampling technique from each colleges found in the university. The researchers used two separate instruments Organizational Climate Questionnaire and Affective Organizational Commitment Questionnaire to measure institutional climate and academicians' affective institutional commitment respectively. Finally, the responses of the respondents were analyzed using SPSS (version 20.0). The findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between four dimensions of institutional climate and affective dimension academicians' institutional commitment, i.e. management and leadership style ( $\beta=.235$ ,  $p<.001$ ), Suitable career ladder ( $\beta=.195$ ,  $p<.05$ ), personnel policies ( $\beta=.177$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and fringe benefit and salary package ( $\beta=.154$ ,  $p<.05$ ). And also it has been proved that institutional climate has a significant role in determining academicians affective organizational commitment ( $R^2=.257$ ) which is significant at  $p=.001$ . So, the institution's management body should improve the level of employees' commitment, especially affective commitment dimension, and retain them through facilitating those dimensions of institutional climate along with the rest dimensions in order to properly retain and enhance academicians' affection towards their institution.

**Key words:** *Institutional climate, Affective Institutional Commitment, DBU, WU*

### Introduction

In this dynamic and globalized climate, an employee has a lot of opportunities to mobilize from one company to another and the environments where the employees work play an initial role in the employees' decision to commit themselves for the institution they are working for. There has been a long-standing interest in the study of organizational climate among organizational researchers. Lee (2012) found that core self-evaluations and three components of psychological climate (interdepartmental service, managerial support for service, and team communication) predicted and positively influenced employee engagement. Here, employees' engagement to their organization or job directly and indirectly leads to job satisfaction,

intrinsic rewards, personal attachment to an organization and better leader-member exchange relationship (LMX). Its importance is partly due to its hypothesized relationship to other organizational phenomena including job satisfaction, job performance, leadership behavior and the quality of work group interaction (Schnake, 1983). According to Veni and Ramachandran (2012), organizational climate is a set of properties of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by employees, that is assumed to be a major force in influencing employee behavior.

According to Glisson (2007) organizational climate is defined as the employees' subjective perceptions of how their work environment affects them as individuals. While organizational culture

is the social glue that helps unite the organization by providing appropriate standards for what should be said and done by the employees. The ability of any university to take off and achieve its goals is a function of its ability to attract, retain and maintain competent and satisfied staff into its employment. The university is an institution of higher learning that provides manpower needs to advance national development in both the public and private sector. The motivating core job characteristics viz., high levels of task identity, autonomy, skill variety and job challenge satisfy an academic's need for engaging, meaningful work activities: a critical psychological state associated with important outcomes such as job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation and work effectiveness. Another positive work environment feature for academics is role clarity (i.e. low levels of role ambiguity) i.e., clear, planned goals and objectives for their jobs, and certainty about their job responsibilities (Winter, Taylor & Sarros, 2000). Organizational work pressure, having a work schedule that meets one's needs, feeling physically safe at work, receiving feedback and organizational quality environment indirectly affect intention to leave through employee job satisfaction and commitment (Karsh, Bookse & Sainfort, 2005).

As the Job-Resource Demand (JD-R) theory suggests, a perceived favorable organizational work environment, may function as a job resource that mitigates job demands and motivates employees, enhancing their willingness to dedicate themselves to their job (Demerouti et al., 2001). The social exchange theory and/or the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), involves repayment; a person who receives a benefit from another reciprocates and provides something beneficial in return. One way for employees to repay their organization is to increase commitment to the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Research on the contribution of people management to organizational performance outcomes such as productivity and profitability has been related to a climate of satisfaction in the workplace (West, Patterson and Dawson, 1999)

and considerable evidence indicates that there are relationships between climate factors and measures of job satisfaction too (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). Shadur, Kienzle and Rodwell (1999) tested whether organizational climate factors (such as the shared perception of the informal and formal policies, practices and procedures) affected employee attitudes such as job satisfaction and commitment. Without structures and procedures that facilitate good supervisor-employee communication, role ambiguity is inevitable, as is job dissatisfaction. Further it has been found that organizational climate acts as a mediating variable for enhancing the relationship of commitment with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction along with organizational climate plays a vital role in retaining the employees by enhancing their commitment towards the organization (Kumar & Giri, 2007).

Glisson and friends (2008) dealt about the impact of organizational climate on employees' behavior toward specific phenomena such as intention to leave, job satisfaction, sustainability, organizational change. Organizational climate has a major influence on motivation, productivity and job satisfaction. It is also a major motivating factor responsible for satisfaction and dissatisfaction of employees and affects the quantum of their turnover (Singh et al., 2011). Susanty (2012) investigated the effect of organizational climate on employee commitment and job satisfaction of the Open University. The results showed that organizational climate significantly affected organizational commitment but not job satisfaction. Saks' (2006) mentioned that mutual exchange relationships will be maintained based on loyalty, trust, and mutual commitment in between engaged employees and their organization, which is a result of favorable reciprocal exchanges between them.

Affective organizational commitment is defined as an employee's positive emotional attachment to his/her work place. An employee who is affectively committed to his organization strongly identifies himself/herself with the goals of the organization in which he is working and desires to

remain a part of the organization. Thus, such employees are committed to their organization because they "want to" than obligated to stay or not due to fear of costs to be incurred during resignation. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the organizational climate of two public institutions located in Ethiopia, namely Debre Berhan and Wollo universities and to examine the influence of organizational climate on academicians' affective organizational commitment by taking four organizational climate dimensions.

### **Rationale for the study**

To render the quality education for their clients, not only public university's but also private educational institutions require employees who are committed, competent, ethically constructed, motivated and have eager to work in that institution. The study conducted by Semu, (2013) revealed that Debre Berhan University is deemed to employ transactional form of leadership style which is by itself characterized by a kind of faultfinding leadership style along with its positive features. The managers in such form of leadership style fights fire and are reactive. Reward is used to encourage for performance and on the other hand coercive power is used for non performance. Hence, academic staffs of public universities do not have positive emotion to affective commitment out of the three dimensions of organizational commitments. And this absence of affective commitment of employees results in interruptions of normal operations, increased replacement and recruitment cost, increased client dissatisfaction, and scheduling difficulties. As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, few or no research was done yet on similar topic, the researcher is motivated to investigate whether this absence of commitment of academicians is resulted from the four dimensions of organizational climate (Management and Leadership styles, Fringe Benefits and Salary Package, Personnel Policies, and Suitable Career

Ladder) being practiced within the institutions or not which can be the major factor for employees' affective organizational commitment.

### **Objective of the study**

The general objective of the study is to investigate the role of selected institutional climate dimensions in determining Academic staffs' affective institutional commitment of Debre Berhan and Wollo universities.

To achieve the overall aim of the study, the following specific objectives were developed:

- ❖ To identify the influence of institutional climate (management and leadership styles, fringe benefits and salary package, personnel policies and suitable career ladder) in determining academicians' affective institutional commitment.
- ❖ To investigate whether significant difference prevails on mean score of three age categories of respondents on affective commitment.

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

The overall goal of the research is to identify the role of selected dimensions of institutional climate in determining affective institutional commitment of Academic staffs' with respect to Debre Berhan and Wollo universities. From the identification of the broad objectives of the research, and theoretical evidence of the related literature the following alternative hypotheses were formulated:

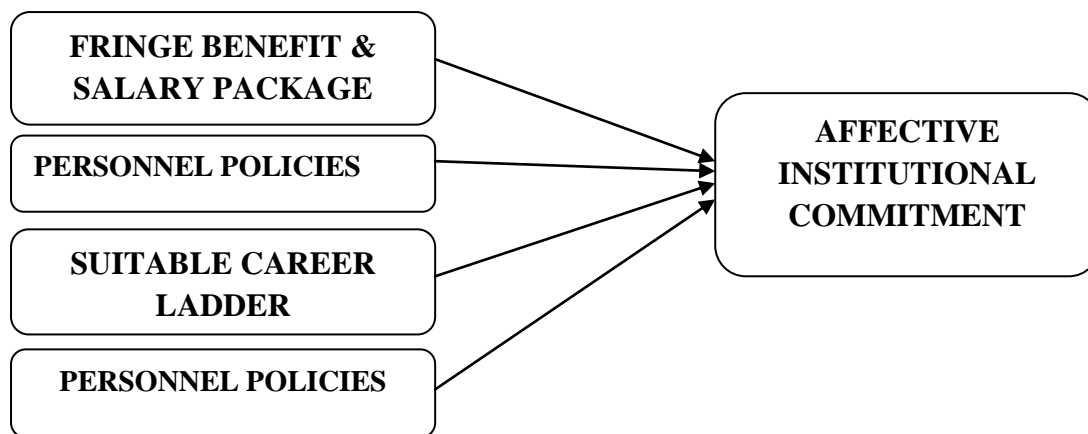
**H<sub>1</sub>:** Management and Leadership styles will have significant and positive influence on academic staffs' organizational commitment.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Fringe Benefits and Salary Package will have significant and positive influence on academic staffs' organizational commitment.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Personnel Policies will have significant and positive influence on faculty institutional commitment.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Suitable Career Ladder will have significant and positive influence on academic staffs' organizational commitment.

### Conceptual Model of the study



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study**

**Source: Adapted from Adenike (2011) & modified by researchers**

### Significance of the Study

The study is believed to have the following importance for the institutions under study, the researchers and other potential researchers. The results of the study will provide institution's administration of the prominent organizational climate dimension, level of commitment, and the correlation and regression between them, together with guidelines where they need to enhance and where they have to invest, in order to improve and get highly committed staff with stable, productive, and creative work environment, that all contribute to institutional development & success. These improvement and success will benefit the institutions' staff and ultimately local community – clients, who receives their services. And finally, the study serves as a basic document for potential researchers as a reference and further detailed study on the same area by showing other future research directions.

### Methodology of the study

#### The study design

From the hypotheses it is evident that the research is of a quantitative nature. The nature of this study lends towards causal-diagnostic research, investigating the effect of Organizational Climate on Academicians' Organizational Commitment with respect to Debre Berhan and Wollo universities. The study is also a cross-sectional in the sense that relevant data will be collected at one point in time.

### Sampling technique and sample size

The data were collected from the randomly selected academic staff respondents using a standardized, self-administered questionnaire after the researcher classified each universities academic staffs into some groups using their faculties and proportionately selects respondents from each faculty. The researchers used Yamane (1973) sample size determination formula and selected 285 respondents from both universities. Then we used purposive cluster sampling, a procedure which is used for selecting a sample that includes identified subgroups from the population in the proportion that they exist in the population.

### Data type and source

In order to generate relevant data for the study, both primary and secondary data sources were used. Primary data are the information that the researchers finds out by him/herself regarding a specific topic. The main advantage with this type of data collection is that it is collected with the research's purpose in mind. This means that the information resulting from it is more consistent with the research questions and purpose. The primary data were gathered from academic staffs of the institutions through dispatching the self-administered, closed-ended questionnaire to them. The closed ended questionnaires which are designed on an ordinal scale of measurement basis were used to collect primary data, so that the

variables could be ranked to measure the degree of their strength or the agreement or the disagreement of the respondents with the variables.

The secondary data of the study were compiled from many sources like information center of the institution, e-sources, library books, journal articles, thesis and dissertations which are relevant to prepare literature review. These data were used to get better insight on the research topic, to establish the viable platform for the theoretical framework constituting the bases of the research, and to design the sample frame and questionnaire for retrieving the primary data.

Another advantage of using secondary data is its comparability character. The researchers used it to validate and compare the data get through questionnaire to existing literature and articles.

#### **Data Collection Instrument**

For the purpose of this study, a quantitative methodology involving a closed-ended questionnaire was used as the measuring instrument. The majority of questions were adapted from a questionnaire on organizational climate by Adenike (2011) and organizational commitment by Nyengane (2007) with modifications to suit the research context. Two separate instruments, namely Organizational Climate Questionnaire (OCQI) having 17 items under four dimensions and Affective dimension from Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQc) having 4 items, was used in the research to obtain quantitative information on organizational climate and academicians' affective organizational commitment respectively. Five-point Likert scale was used for both instruments with 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree ranges. The overall reliability of organizational climate questionnaire (OCQI) was checked using SPSS and found to be Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.766 which is reliable since it's above 0.7

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) is a self-scoring questionnaire. Responses

to each of the 4 items was rated using a 5-point Likert scale with anchors labeled: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. The researchers adapted OCQ instrument from Nyengane (2007) (developed by Meyer & Allen, 1997) which has 12 items, where each subscales of commitment contains three questions but for the convenience of the study only affective dimension was selected. The reliability of OCQ was checked using SPSS and found to be Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.849 which is reliable since it's above 0.7.

#### **Data analysis and Presentation Procedures**

After collecting the data, it is necessary to employ statistical techniques to analyze the information, as this study is quantitative in nature. Using SPSS (version 20.0) the researcher conducted inferential statistics, namely independent t test, one way ANOVA, correlation and regression. According to Field, (2013), Pearson correlation coefficient can range from -1.00 to +1.00. The value of -1.00 represents a perfect negative correlation. While a value of +1.00 represents a perfect positive correlation. A value of 0.00 correlations represents no relationship. The results of correlation coefficient may be interpreted as follow: when  $r$  is  $-/+0.1$ = small effect size,  $-/+0.3$  medium effect size,  $-/+0.5$ =large, effect size.

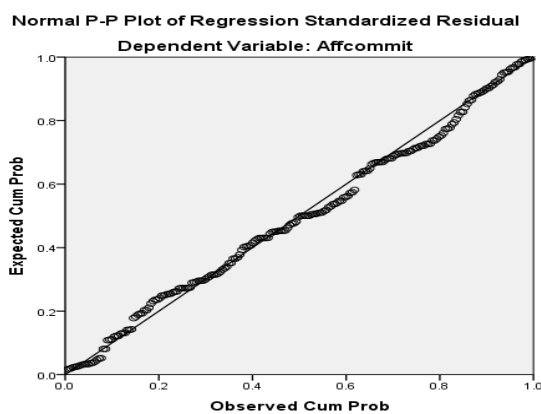
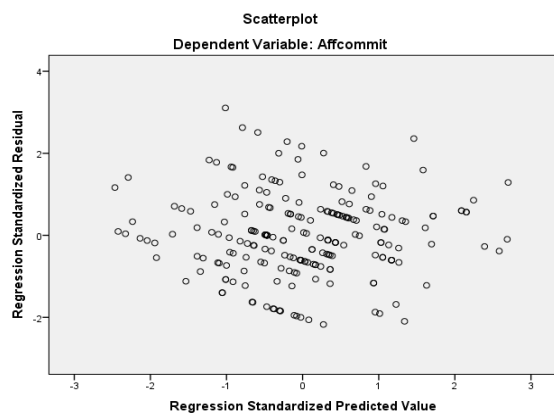
#### **Results and discussions**

The response rate of the study is 76%. Before applying regression analysis, we must check for assumptions of regression and the following values and figures were found showing all assumptions are met.

#### **Independence and Homoscedasticity:**

To check independence and homoscedasticity of residuals, the below figure shows a rectangular points in which all residuals lies in between -3 to +3, which meets our assumptions. Independence or autocorrelation can also be checked using the value of Durbin Watson test shows 1.806 which is nearest to 2 shows the absence of autocorrelation.

**Figure 2: Independence and Homoscedasticity of the residuals**



**Table 2: Normality test**

| Tests of Normality                                 |                                 |     |              |              |     |             |
|--|---------------------------------|-----|--------------|--------------|-----|-------------|
|  | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |     |              | Shapiro-Wilk |     |             |
|  | Sts                             | Df  | Sig.         | Stsc         | Df  | Sig.        |
| Unstandardized Residuals                           | .053                            | 216 | <b>.200*</b> | .988         | 216 | <b>.059</b> |
| Stanadardized Residual                             | .053                            | 216 | <b>.200*</b> | .988         | 216 | <b>.059</b> |
| *. This is a lower bound of the true significance. |                                 |     |              |              |     |             |
| a. Lilliefors Significance Correction              |                                 |     |              |              |     |             |

Shapiro-Wilk sig. value is greater than .05 which shows our assumptions of normality has been met.

**Table 3: Correlation results**

| Correlations  |     |        |        |        |               |
|---|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
|   | MLS | FBSP   | PP     | SCL    | AC            |
| MLS   | 1   | .202** | .360** | .130** | <b>.355**</b> |
| FBSP  |     | 1      | .163*  | .254** | <b>.280**</b> |
| PP  |     |        | 1      | .399** | <b>.365**</b> |
| SCL   |     |        |        | 1      | <b>.336**</b> |
| AC  |     |        |        |        | 1             |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). N=216 p=.000 |     |        |        |        |               |

Source: Researchers' survey, 2016

**Table 4: Regression output (A & B)**

| Variable A    | R     | R sqr | Adj. R Sqr | Std. Err | F      | Sig.  |
|---------------|-------|-------|------------|----------|--------|-------|
| Org.l climate | .507a | .257  | .243       | .71772   | 18.252 | .000b |

| B              |            |              |            |             |       |             |                    |       |
|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------|-------------|--------------------|-------|
| Coefficients a |            |              |            |             |       |             |                    |       |
| Model          |            | Unstd Coeff. |            | Std Coeff   | T     | Sig.        | Collinearity stat. |       |
|                |            | B            | Std. Error | Beta        |       |             | Tolerance          | VIF   |
| 1              | (Constant) | .356         | .253       |             | 1.410 | .160        |                    |       |
|                | MLS        | .227         | .062       | <b>.235</b> | 3.643 | <b>.000</b> | 1.000              | 1.000 |
|                | PP         | .191         | .074       | <b>.177</b> | 2.581 | <b>.011</b> |                    |       |
|                | SCL        | .197         | .067       | <b>.195</b> | 2.950 | <b>.004</b> | 1.000              | 1.000 |
|                | FBSP       | .201         | .081       | <b>.154</b> | 2.476 | <b>.014</b> |                    |       |

Source: Researcher's survey, 2016/17

Result in Table 3 and 4 shows the model summary of correlation and regression analysis of independent variable and dependent variables. The correlation coefficient (Pearson r) is a standardized measure of an observed effect which is commonly used to measure the size of an effect, and the values of +(-) .1 represent small effect, +(-) .3 is a medium effect and +(-) .5 is a large effect (Field, 2013). Thus, r values of the table 3 showed the Correlation coefficient (r) of the analysis having medium effect for Management and leadership style, personnel policies and suitable career ladder with ( $r=.355, r=.365, r=.336$ ) respectively and small effect for fringe benefit and salary package ( $r=.280$ ) all significant at  $p=.05$  R square shows the change in dependent variable due to independent variable, value shows in table ( $R^2=.257$  for AC) which shows that that 25.7% of the change in affective commitment is due to the application of selected organizational climate dimensions.

Results in Table 4 show the significance of relationship between Independent variables and dependent variables. Unstandardized Coefficients Beta value of each dimensions of commitment shows that if there is one unit change in independent variable what would be unit change in dependent variable, the results show that if one there is one unit change in Management and leadership style there would be .227 change in dependent variable affective commitment, .191 change for affective commitment, .197 change due to suitable career ladder and .201 change for affective commitment due to fringe benefit and salary package. It also shows that there is there is significant relationship between transformation leadership and employees commitment ( $p<.05$ ) and the model is fit. Findings show that there is significant relationship between four dimensions of organizational climate (management and leadership style, personnel policies, suitable career ladder and fringe benefit and salary package) and affective organizational commitment of academicians in both universities ( $\beta=.235, p<.001, \beta=.177, p<.011, \beta=.195, p<.004$  &  $\beta=.154, pp<.014$ ) respectively. It also shows that all (four) dimensions of organizational dimensions positively and significantly influences affective

organizational commitment. Thus, alternative hypotheses from one to four were accepted. That means all dimensions discussed here have a significant and positive influence on academicians' affective organizational commitment. The finding of this study is consistent with other researchers like Iqbal (2008), Adenike (2011), Rahmet (2015), and Bahrami et al., (2016) where all of them found significant positive relationship in between organizational climate dimensions and Affective Commitment with different degrees. From this study's finding, one can conclude that the practice of those elements of organizational dimensions has a significant positive effect on employees' emotional attachment to the institution, identification with an institution and a desire to maintain their membership (want to stay) within the institution and more emphasis should be given by leaders of the institution since Affective Commitment results in increased productivity, personnel stability, lower absenteeism rate, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship. The findings of Syahrums et al., (2016) showed that competence has positive significant effect to the organizational commitment, work satisfaction and the employees' performance; organization culture has positive influence on the organizational commitment, work satisfaction and the employees' performance; organization climate also has positive impact on the organizational commitment, work satisfaction and the employees' performance. In the other side, organizational commitment positively affects the job satisfaction and employees commitment.

Authentic and supportive leadership is theorized to impact employee engagement of followers in the sense of increasing their involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm for work (Gardner et al 2005; Schneider, Macey & Barbera (2009).

### **Summary and recommendations**

Organizational climate for an organization is similar to that of the personality for a person. One of the most important factors for organizational goal achievement of any type is manpower working in different organizational climate. This research is then aimed at dealing the role of selected

organizational dimensions in determining academicians' affective organizational commitment in the case of Debre Berhan and Wollo University during the year of 2015/16. A total of 216 respondents were selected using stratified probability sampling technique from each colleges found in the university. The researchers used two separate instruments Organizational Climate Questionnaire and Affective Organizational Commitment Questionnaire to measure organizational climate and academicians' affective organizational commitment respectively. Finally, the responses of the respondents were analyzed using SPSS (version 20.0).

The findings of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between four dimensions of organizational climate and affective dimension academicians' organizational commitment. And also it has been proved that organizational climate has a significant role in determining academicians affective organizational commitment which is significant at  $p=.001$ .

From *management and leadership styles* point of view, even though management body and leaders supports the lecturing profession, majority of the respondents responded that they are dissatisfied with the leadership styles being exercised in their universities, so that the leaders of the universities must adapt the appropriate leadership style for their institutions.

Regarding *fringe benefit and salary package*, it is the basic determinant of academic staffs' affective organizational commitment and almost all respondents are dissatisfied with non-competitiveness of university remuneration package, inadequate benefits provided by universities, and variation of benefits given university and external labor market. This is the main reason which drives academicians to leave their career and appropriate amendment must be made not only in Debre Berhan and Wollo Universities, but also in all universities of Ethiopia.

*Personnel policy* is the major determinant of academicians' affective organizational commitment and greater emphasis should be given to it via creating unanimity of academic staffs against university's mission, applying competence based

performance appraisal system, participating staffs while new policies are formulated or existing ones are reviewed, and sponsoring and creating specially overseas training and study in order to retain their qualified manpower.

Regarding *suitable career ladder*, respondents agree with idea that they have an opportunity for career advancement and career paths are well defined but they disagree with the idea that senior academicians share useful information and provide opportunities to overcome any limitations in knowledge with junior academicians. So, senior academicians must share their experience and give advice for the junior ones so that attractive and all rounded academic staffs will be there in both universities. So, the institution's leaders should improve the level of employees' affective commitment, and retain them through facilitating those dimensions of organizational climate along with the rest dimensions in order to properly retain and enhance academicians' affection towards their institution.

#### **Limitations of the Study and future direction**

Although the research proposal is designed properly it is not guaranteed that it is free from constraints. Thus, the researchers encountered unfilled questionnaire or response from the respondents due to lack of willingness and opinion they have on the importance of the finding. Since the concern of the study is limited to only two public universities, it is difficult to generalize the finding of the study for the rest of public universities available in Ethiopia and also it focused on only academic staffs, not administrative staffs, so it is difficult to generalize the result for administrative staffs and other temporary employees' of the institutions. As it was indicated above, this study solely emphasized on four dimensions of organizational climate dimensions, keeping other factors constant, which might have an influence on the level of employees' organizational commitment and in the future, it will be better if other factors influencing employees' commitment like organizational support, job characteristics, organizational tenure, workplace values...etc should be added as an independent variable. It would be better if a nationwide study covering samples from the whole population of the higher public education institutions in Ethiopia.



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