

# **The Role of Psychological Climate on Organizational Commitment: Reporting Results of Two Field Studies from State Government Agencies**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In an effort to understand how the proximal work environment shapes public sector employees' work attitudes, two parallel studies were designed to examine how perceptions of psychological climate influence the organizational commitment of three occupational groups--clerical, professional, and managerial/executive. In the first study, data were gathered from 267 employees in 11 New York State agencies. A second study focused on a single state agency with a diverse and geographically dispersed workforce; altogether 2136 employees in 12 divisions participated. Convergent results indicated that the relationships between organizational commitment and four domains of psychological climate varied across occupational groups. Implications of these results with respect to developing effective strategies for enhancing public sector employees' organizational commitment are discussed in detail.

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The extent to which employees feel psychologically attached and committed to their organizations has been shown to relate to a number of important individual-level outcomes such as job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, turnover intention and absenteeism (Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran 2005; Mathieu and Zajac 1990; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky 2002). Commitment also is capable of influencing employees' feelings of well-being, as well as organizations' overall effectiveness (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). An improved understanding of the sources of organizational commitment in public agencies, therefore, has both theoretical and practical importance.

Increasing employees' organizational commitment, however, is a major challenge for public organizations with limited resources (Kim 2005), declining interest in employment in government (Lewis and Frank 2002), and increasing competition with private sector organizations in recruiting and retaining a highly skilled workforce. In addition, for the past two decades, organizations have been experiencing the impact of drastic changes in the labor market, including increased globalization, frequent mergers, and organizational restructuring and, consequently, employee job insecurity and the rapid growth of a temporary workforce (Blau 2003; Blau and Holladay 2006; Lee, Carswell, and Allen 2000). To cope with the uncertainty of the labor market, employees are devoting more attention to aspects of their lives outside of their organizations in which they believe that they have more control (Johnson 1996; Lee et al. 2000; Reilly, Brett, and Storch 1993). For all of these reasons, public agencies are facing difficulty in strengthening employees' organizational commitment.

Public management scholars have long acknowledged public officials' commitment as a key element of their administrative responsibility (Friedrich 1940; Gaus 1936). More recently, Miller (2000) suggested that inherent moral hazard problems in public agencies could not be resolved with incentives and penalties alone and that commitment to professional standards was the ultimate safeguard against political opportunism. Despite much writing over decades about the importance of organizational commitment in public agencies, research has been sporadic, although more frequent now than previously. Many studies (Balfour and Wechsler 1990, 1991, 1996; Buchanan 1974, 1974; Liou and Nyhan

1994; Lyons, Duxbury, and Higgins 2006; Moon 2000; Steinhaus and Perry 1996) have focused primarily on understanding differences between public and private sector employees' organizational commitment levels, and some have noted that public sector employees exhibited lower levels of commitment than private sector employees.

More recent work has expanded the scope of investigation and focused on the antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment (Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Park and Rainey 2007; Reid, Riemenschneider, and Armstrong 2008, 2008; Robertson, Lo, and Tang 2007; Robertson and Tang 1995; Yang and Pandey 2008). However, much of this work is not based on an integrated theoretical approach and has not paid close attention to understanding how the proximal work environment influences organizational commitment for multiple occupational groups. The two present studies represent a combined effort to move in this direction by examining how perceptions of psychological climate (James, Hater, Gent, and Bruni, 1978; James, Gent, Hater, and Coray 1979; James and James 1989; James, Choi, Ko, McNeil, and Minton 2008) influenced the strength of organizational commitment in three separate occupational groups: clerical/support, professional/technical, managerial/executive.

### **AN OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001: 301) noted that "commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action relevant to one or more targets." From this perspective, organizational commitment is a stabilizing force that gives direction to employees' behavior (Meyer, Becker, and Van Dick 2004; Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). Commitment is distinguishable from exchange-based forms of motivation. Even in the presence of conflicting values, attitudes, and motives, organizational commitment can influence individuals to act in meaningful ways that differ from mere self-interest (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). Commitment can be both attitudinal and behavioral (Mowday, Porter, and Steers 1982). This distinction, however, pertains more to the process of developing commitment than to the focus of commitment (Meyer and Allen 1991, 1997), because individuals can be committed to both an entity (e.g., organization) and to a particular behavior (e.g., promoting workplace diversity).

Porter and colleagues (Mowday et al. 1982; Mowday, Steers, and Porter 1979; Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian 1974) defined organizational commitment as the overall strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organization. They conceptualized organizational commitment as having three components: 1) a strong belief in and acceptance of an organization's goals and values; 2) a willingness to exert

considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and 3) a desire to maintain organizational membership. Even with these distinctive aspects, however, they considered the construct to be unidimensional in that the focus was primarily affective.

Drawing on Kelman's (1958) work on attitudes and behavioral change, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) suggested that organizational commitment can take three forms: compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance reflects instrumental behavior designed to gain rewards. Identification occurs when employees want to maintain membership with an organization due to its attractive goals and values, even though they may not personally adopt those goals and values. Internalization reflects behaviors that are driven by personal values and goals that are consistent with, perhaps even socialized by, the organization. Although O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) provided initial empirical support for their model, later studies based on this approach encountered difficulty in distinguishing identification from internalization (Caldwell, Chatman, and O'Reilly 1990; Vandenberg, Self, and Seo 1994).

Meyer and Allen (1984) undertook an integration of attitudinal and behavioral studies of organizational commitment based on emergent distinctions in the existing unidimensional models. They initially identified two components of organizational commitment: affective and continuance. Affective commitment was defined as employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an organization. It reflects the strength of employees' beliefs in their organization's goals, the shared sense of importance in its values, and the feeling of personal satisfaction derived from their involvement in the organization. Continuance commitment was defined in terms of employees' perceived costs or lack of alternatives associated with leaving the organization. In subsequent work (Allen and Meyer 1990; Meyer and Allen 1991), they added a third component—normative commitment—to their model, based on the initial work by Wiener (1982) who had argued that individuals also can be committed to organizations because of their sense of strong moral/ethical obligations.

Although Allen and Meyer (1990, 1996) accumulated empirical evidence to support their three-dimensional model, some disagreement has remained about whether normative commitment is distinguishable from affective commitment, as well as whether continuance commitment itself is unidimensional. Confirmatory factor analyses results have shown better statistics of model fit when affective and normative commitment are defined as separate factors (Dunham, Grube, and Castaneda 1994; Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail 1994; Hackett, Bycio, and Hausdorf 1994), although the correlation between the two components remains high. Results regarding the dimensionality of continuance

commitment are mixed. Some studies (Dunham et al., 1994; Ko, Price, and Muller, 1997) have found empirical support for a single factor, while other studies (Hackett et al. 1994; Somers 1993) have found evidence for two factors—one reflecting costs associated with leaving the organization and the other defined by the lack of alternative employment opportunities.

In addition to the models reviewed above, a number of other multidimensional frameworks of organizational commitment have been proposed over the years (see, for example, Angle and Perry 1981; Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, and Sincich 1993; Mayer and Schoorman 1992, 1998; Penley and Gould 1988). Among these models, Meyer and Allen's (1990, 1991) three-component model has established itself as the dominant approach in the organizational commitment literature. Although differences exist among these models, common to all of them is the idea that commitment is experienced as a psychological state (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001) that binds employees toward a particular course of action; that which constitutes the psychological state, however, remains a point of debate in the literature. Most of these frameworks include a dimension of psychological state that reflects employees' affective attachment toward the organization, although the basis for the development of affective attachment (i.e., emotional involvement, value congruence, identification) differs in the various models. In addition, most of the models appear to recognize that employees may persist in a course of action out of obligation or with a cost-avoidance interest. Whether an individual's persistence in a course of action based on obligation or cost-avoidance can be considered as organizational commitment, however, remains arguable.

The two present studies were focused on the development of affective commitment because, relative to normative and continuance commitment, affective commitment has been shown to have the most consistent relationship with desirable organizational outcomes (Meyer et al. 2002). Current research indicates that affective commitment correlates more strongly and with a wider range of outcomes than normative or continuance commitment. In recent meta-analyses by Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran (2005) and Meyer and colleagues (2002), all three forms of commitment were found to correlate negatively with turnover intention, but the magnitude differed; the strongest correlation was with affective commitment, followed by normative and continuance commitment. In addition, Meyer and colleagues (2002) found that affective commitment correlated more strongly than normative and continuance commitment with job performance, absenteeism, and organizational citizenship behavior. A possible explanation for these results is that affective commitment is more broadly defined and operationalized

than normative and continuance commitment, but a more plausible explanation may be that the strength of employees' psychological attachment toward their organizations is not equal for all forms of commitment. Employees who are committed to their organizations because of an emotional connection may experience a stronger attachment than those who are committed out of the imposition of obligation or cost avoidance.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT**

Psychological climate is “an individual's cognitive representations of relatively proximal situational conditions, expressed in terms that reflect psychologically meaningful interpretations of the situation” (James et al., 1978: 786). Fundamentally, individual perceptions about the significance of the work environment relative to personal well-being altogether comprise the psychological climate (James et al., 2008). Perceptions of psychological climate are shaped by cognitive information processing in which individuals use higher order schemas—abstract and generalized beliefs about situations—to interpret ongoing events, identify necessary actions, and subsequently evaluate the appropriateness of those actions in organizations (James et al., 2008); Parker, Baltes, Young, Huff, Altmann, Lacost, and Roberts 2003).

Psychological climate is a construct at the individual level of articulated theory and should be analyzed strictly as such (James et al., 2008). It is different from group-level constructs such as organizational climate and organizational culture (James et al. 2008; Parker et al. 2003). Organizational climate is an aggregate molar construct that reflects employees' shared perception of their work environment (Schneider and Reichers 1983). Such perception is shared through group interactions and reflects the sense-making process by which group members collectively understand and share their experiences of organizational events (Parker et al. 2003). When employees in an organization agree in their reports of psychological climate, their shared perceptions may be aggregated to describe the organizational climate (James et al. 2008). Organizational culture refers to a system of normative beliefs, values, and shared behavioral expectations that defines what is considered to be appropriate or inappropriate behavior in an organization (Rousseau 1990; Schein 1990). In contrast to the individualistic aspects of psychological climate, organizational culture represents system-level perceptions.

Perceptions of psychological climate are partly a consequence of employees' personal work-related values, latent indicators of what individuals want to gain from their workplace (James et al. 2008). An illustrative list of work-related values might include desires for: clarity, harmony and justice; challenge, independence and responsibility;

support and recognition; and warm and friendly social relations in organizations (Locke 1976: 1329). These values can engender cognitive schemas that employees use to assess the impact of their work environment on their organizational well-being (James and James 1989). A desire for equity, for example, may lead an employee to attend to the fairness of an organization's performance evaluation process. Thus, work-related values reflect what employees consider to be important for their own well-being, and the resulting cognitive schemas are employed to assess the degree to which such values are fulfilled in their organizations (James et al. 2008).

Employees' valuations of the attributes of their work environment can be adequately captured with measures of psychological climate. James and colleagues (James and James 1989; James et al. 2008) identified four primary domains of the psychological climate that are based on important personal work-related values (i.e., desires for clarity, harmony and justice; challenge, independence and responsibility; support and recognition; and warm and friendly social relations). These four domains<sup>1</sup> are: 1) role stress and lack of harmony; 2) challenge and autonomy; 3) supervisory support and facilitation; and 4) social environment characteristics. This model has found empirical support in a variety of work settings (Parker et al. 2003).

A key aspect of the psychological climate model is the assertion that employees generally respond emotionally while assessing characteristics of their work environment, because such attributes are directly related to their sense of personal well-being in an organization (James et al. 2008). Since perceptions of psychological climate denote emotionally relevant cognitions, measures of psychological climate are expected to be related to employees' affective reactions to the organization, including their organizational commitment. Past research has shown that various measures of psychological climate are related to affective organizational commitment (James et al. 2008; Parker et al. 2003). Current research on organizational commitment points to four sets of variables (shown in Figure 1 below) that parallel the measures of the four domains of psychological climate identified by James and colleagues (James and James 1989; James et al. 2008). These four sets of variables are: 1) role and goal ambiguity (for the domain of role stress and lack of harmony); 2) job challenge and autonomy (for the domain of challenge and autonomy); 3) perceived supervisory support and upward influence (for the domain of leadership

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<sup>1</sup> James and colleagues (James et al. 1978; Jones and James 1979) initially identified five domains of psychological climate, but in subsequent work they included only four domains. Aspects of the fifth domain, organizational and subsystem attributes, were included in the first (i.e., role stress and lack of harmony) and fourth domains (i.e., social environment characteristics) of their model.

support and facilitation); and 4) social cohesion and organizational fairness (for the domain of social environment characteristics).

### **Role and Goal Ambiguity**

Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1974) suggested that every position in an organization should have a clear set of responsibilities, so that the organization can provide employees with guidance and direction in carrying out their work and ultimately hold them accountable. When employees are unaware of what is expected of them, they may hesitate to act, show a lack of self-determination, and feel that they are unable to make a difference in achieving the organization's goals (Spreitzer 1996). Hence, role ambiguity--the degree to which a job lacks well-specified responsibilities--is likely to decrease work motivation and affective commitment.

**H1:** Role ambiguity will be negatively associated with affective commitment.

Individuals may be committed to public service because government organizations provide them with opportunities to address important social issues (Perry and Wise 1990). Any such benefits may be offset, however, by ambiguous and conflicting goals held by those organizations. A goal is ambiguous when it has multiple and competing interpretations (Chun and Rainey 2005a). There are many sources of goal ambiguity in public agencies. Competing demands from constituencies, for example, can lead to political compromises, which in turn can lead to vague or loosely defined policy mandates for public agencies (Lowi 1969). Vague policy mandates tend to have multiple and contradictory goals; they create uncertainty for public managers in deciding on the priority of implementing different goals (Chun and Rainey 2005a).

Further, many public agencies (e.g., welfare and health and human services agencies) are chartered to deal with complex and intractable policy problems. It is often difficult for these agencies to formulate clear guidelines for employees to determine the operational tasks needed to fulfill complex policy mandates. Meyers, Riccucci, and Lurie (2001), for example, studied the management of welfare reform initiatives at the local levels in three states and found that, when both policy goals and organizational systems were complex, there was a substantial gap between the day-to-day priorities and activities of front-line staff and the larger policy goals of those welfare agencies. Policy problem complexity, therefore, can result in *directive goal ambiguity* in public agencies (Chun and Rainey 2005a).

Conflicting and ambiguous goals have been shown to have negative implications for the performance of public agencies. Chun and Rainey (2005b), for example, found that different dimensions of goal ambiguity in federal agencies were negatively related to managerial effectiveness, overall customer service orientation, and employees' productivity. Goal ambiguity can influence public sector employees' attitudes, as well. Meyer and colleagues (2001), for instance, noted that gaps between a policy's goals and an agency's operational goals could result in low morale in employees. Further, Wright (2004), using Locke and Latham's (1990) goal-setting theory, suggested that when organizations' goals are ambiguous, goals held by employees at the job level might be ambiguous, as well. Conflicting and ambiguous organizational goals can create role stress among employees which then leads to frustration and less commitment (Pandey and Wright 2006). The present study, therefore, expected that goal ambiguity would be negatively associated with affective commitment, as well:

**H2:** Goal ambiguity will be negatively related to affective commitment.

### **Job Challenge and Autonomy**

Job challenge—the degree to which a job demands an intensity of attention and effort—and job autonomy—the degree to which employees have control over how they carry out their tasks—are considered motivational factors in work (Wright, 2004). When a job is perceived to be complex and requires considerable effort, a sense of pride and accomplishment increases with the completion of that job. Thus, challenging jobs are likely to make work more rewarding and increase affective commitment. Similarly, when employees are given considerable autonomy and discretion in carrying out their tasks, they have a sense of psychological ownership in their job. Hence, greater autonomy was expected to result in a higher level of organizational commitment. Past research generally has supported a positive relation between these two psychological climate variables and affective commitment (see, for example, Mathieu and Zajac 1990; Wallace 1995) and led to testing the following two hypotheses more specifically in this study:

**H3:** Job challenge will be positively related to affective commitment.

**H4:** Job autonomy will be positively related to affective commitment.

### **Supervisory Support and Upward Influence**

Employees' overall attitude toward the organization is influenced in large part by their relations with their supervisors. When supervisors value employees' contributions and take personal interest in their growth, career development, and well-being in the

organization, employees' reciprocate by showing commitment toward their supervisors and the organization. Previous studies also indicated a positive relation between perceived supervisory support and affective commitment. Mathieu and Zajac (1990), for example, found that leader consideration is an important predictor of affective commitment, and Ko, Price, and Mueller (1997) found supervisory support to have a significant impact on affective commitment, as well. The linkage between leadership support and affective commitment also has been documented in self-directed teams (Bishop and Scott 2000). Therefore, this study also expected that:

**H5:** Perceived supervisory support will be positively related to affective commitment.

Participative decision making has been a key focus of leadership theory and research. From the perspective of subordinates, a critical factor in participation is the extent to which supervisory decisions can be influenced by their involvement (James et al 1979). Perceptions of such influence is indicative of perceived empowerment, that is, the extent to which employees believe that they are members of a strong team in which their efforts are valued and supported (Lawler 1986). Empowerment promotes trust, increases a sense of control, and makes work experience intrinsically rewarding (Lawler 1986). Furthermore, when employees perceive that they have an active role in important organizational activities and have opportunities for their voices to be heard, they become relationally embedded in the organization and committed to its goals. Park and Rainey (2007), for example, found that federal employees' perceived empowerment was related positively to their affective commitment. Therefore, the following hypothesis concerning upward influence was tested in this study:

**H6:** The ability to influence decision-making processes will be positively associated with affective commitment.

### **Social Cohesion and Organizational Fairness**

The present study was designed with an additional expectation that social cohesion would be an important predictor of affective commitment, based on the assertions of relational cohesion theory (Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2000; Lawler and Yoon 1996). Relational cohesion theory suggests that frequent productive social exchanges between two or more actors that are based on mutual interdependence result in increased positive emotional feelings towards each other and improve perceived predictability of the actors involved in the exchange process. Positive emotions and the perception of predictability

together make productive social exchanges salient as a cohesive force and result in a realization of group formation. With frequent social interactions, a high level of perceived cohesion is likely to increase bonding and solidarity within the group, to generate a sense of group identity, and to increase commitment toward it (Belanger, Edwards, and Wright 2003; Lawler et al. 2000; Lawler and Yoon 1996; Osinsky and Mueller 2004; Wallace 1995). A high level of cohesion among employees in an organization, therefore, would result in a high level of affective commitment.

**H7:** Social cohesion will be positively related to affective commitment.

Current research in organizational justice suggests that employees' perceptions of organizational fairness include judgments about equity in the allocation of organizational resources (Adams 1965), the formal policies and procedures used in making decisions about allocating those resources (Leventhal 1976, 1980; Leventhal, Karuza, and Fry 1980), and the quality of interpersonal treatment received by employees in an organization (Bies 2001, 2005; Bies and Moag 1986). Fairness in an organization's formal procedures and in its informal practices is important for enhancing employees' work motivation (Tyler and Blader 2000). Perception of fairness in organization's policies and practices provides its employees with information about the value of their organizational membership (Lind and Tyler 1988; Tyler and Lind 1992; Tyler and Blader 2000; Tyler and Blader 2003; Blader and Tyler 2009). When employees are treated fairly by their employing organization, they feel motivated and engage in cooperative behaviors for the organization (Tyler and Blader 2000; Tyler and Blader 2003; Blader and Tyler 2009). Both experimental and field studies have shown that organizational fairness is associated with the emotional reaction of employees toward the organization including their affective commitment (Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001; Colquitt et al. 2001). The following hypothesis concerning organizational fairness, therefore, was tested in the present study:

**H8:** Organizational fairness will be positively related to affective commitment.

In addition to testing the above eight hypotheses, an important contribution of this paper was in its anticipation that the relationship between measures of psychological climate and affective commitment might vary in strength across occupational groups. This research question has received scant attention in the literature on organizational commitment. As discussed above, the meaning and significance of work-environment attributes to employees is partly a function of their own work-related values (James et al. 2008). Because occupational groups tend to have somewhat unique value systems and

distinctive subcultures (Schein 1990; Van Maanen and Barley 1984), the importance of particular work-related values was expected to vary across occupational groups in governmental agencies. The research designs upon which the two present studies were based specifically were formulated to allow for the inclusion and identification of public employees from three distinct occupational groups, so that the effect of such differences on affective commitment could be documented.

## **STUDY ONE**

### **Research Method**

The first study was conducted with a field survey of a sample of state government employees. Data were gathered by mail correspondence using an eight-page questionnaire. The sample for this study consisted of 385 New York State employees drawn from a two-stage cluster sampling procedure. In the first stage, a sample of 12 organizations was randomly selected from the population of 72 state agencies in New York; probability for inclusion was determined by the total number of agency employees. Of these 12 agencies, five provided a current list of their employees. Employee lists from the seven remaining agencies were taken from the most recent New York State Office of General Services (OGS) Telephone Directory. One agency was dropped from further study because the available sampling frame was clearly restricted. In the second stage, 35 employees who worked in the state capital were selected randomly from each of the 11 agencies. A total of 385 selected participants initially were notified about the study in a personally addressed and signed letter sent to their office address. Five days after this introductory letter, an eight-page questionnaire with a similar cover letter was mailed to each selected employee. All questionnaires were coded for tracking purposes. After the first mailing, non-respondents received two additional mailings: a postcard follow-up after 10 days and a personally addressed and signed letter and replacement questionnaire after 21 days. These measures were taken to maximize survey response rate (Dillman 1978; Dillman 1991).

Of the 385 questionnaires that initially were mailed, 30 were returned uncompleted because those selected participants were no longer employed in the state agencies. From the reduced sample of 355 employees, 267 usable questionnaires were returned for an overall response rate of 75.2 percent; response rates by agency ranged from a low of 64.5 percent to a high of 83.9 percent. A brief demographic overview of the respondents is provided in Tables 1 and 2; further demographic details are provided by Wright (2004). As shown in Table 1, most (89.5 percent) of the respondents were white; 51.3 percent were

female and 48.7 percent were male; and over 60 percent reported having earned a college degree. Nearly one-quarter (23.1 percent) of the respondents reported their job was best described as clerical or support, exactly half (50 percent) as professional or technical, and more than one-quarter as managerial or executive. Salary grade level provided an additional measure of the respondents' nature of job responsibility. One-third (33.2 percent) were in salary grade level 17 or below, and two-thirds (66.8 percent) were in salary grade level 18 or above. Table 2 presents key descriptive statistics that summarize distributions of respondents' ages and tenures in their current position, current agency, and in state government. Mean age (47.1 years) and lengths of tenure (7.8 years, 15.9 years, and 20.9 years, respectively) did not differ significantly from demographic parameters of the state workforce (Wright, 2004).

Respondents were divided into three groups depending on the nature of their self-reported position and their salary grade. Clerical and support employees below salary grade 18 formed the first group ( $n = 81$ ). Professional and technical employees at salary grade 18 or above were placed in the second group ( $n = 111$ ). Managers and executives (also at salary grade 18 or above) comprised the group at higher levels of their organizational hierarchies ( $n = 71$ ).<sup>2</sup> Four respondents could not be classified due to missing self-reports.

All respondents completed a 114-item questionnaire designed to examine employee perceptions of their work context, job and organizational characteristics, as well affective organizational commitment, work motivation, job satisfaction, and intention to quit. In addition to the variables relevant here, data also were collected for other organizational- and individual-level variables, the analysis for which is beyond the scope of the current study. Items for all of the variables were measured on either a six-point (coded 1–6) strength of agreement (strongly disagree, generally disagree, disagree a little, agree a little, generally agree, and strongly agree) or a five-point (coded 0–4) frequency of occurrence (almost never/never, rarely, sometimes, often, and almost always/always) scale. A complete list of the items included in each measure is provided in the Appendix.

Each of the eight psychological climate variables was assessed using multiple items borrowed, wherever possible, from previously validated measures. Steers' (1975, 1976) Task-Goal Attribute Scales provided the basis for the two-item measure of job autonomy and the three-item measure of role ambiguity. The four-item measure of job challenge and variety was derived from the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman and Oldham 1975). Locke

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<sup>2</sup> For occupational groups of this size or larger, statistically significant correlations ( $p < .01$ ) are found above  $r = .30$  where approximately 10% or more of variation is shared—an organizationally meaningful connection between measures.

and Latham's (1990) Goal Setting Questionnaire suggested appropriate items for the three-item measure of upward influence in decision making about work objectives and procedures. The four-item measure of social cohesion originated as one of the eight scales used to operationalize the competing values framework for organizational effectiveness (Rohrbaugh 1981). The three-item measure of supervisory support was developed with items drawn from the assessment of the mentor, facilitator, and monitor roles also suggested by the competing values framework (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, & McGrath, 2003). Goal ambiguity was measured using four items adapted from Wright and his colleagues (Wright 2004; Wright and Davis 2003). Each of the three items for the measure of organizational fairness was constructed to tap onto procedural, distributive, and interpersonal aspects of organizational justice respectively. A principal components analysis of all of the psychological climate measures was undertaken to establish their discriminant validity; factor analysis results are discussed in more detail in the following section.

The dependent measure of affective commitment was constructed using four items adapted from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al. 1979). Space constraints in questionnaire design precluded inclusion of additional affective commitment items (or, for that matter, a larger number of items for any antecedent measures). The correlates of affective commitment were measured using four items for work motivation, three items for job satisfaction, and two items for intention to quit. These scales were included in the present study primarily to establish the convergent and discriminant validity of the affective commitment measure. Intention to quit was expected to be most highly correlated with affective commitment; work motivation was expected to generate the lowest (though significant) correlation.

## **Results**

Item-level responses to the dependent measure of affective commitment were relatively positive. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents agreed that they were proud to be a part of their organizations, and less than one-quarter expressed any difficulty in agreeing with the policies of their organizations. While this suggests that these employees generally thought favorably of their organizations, over 40 percent also agreed that their organizations do very little to deserve their loyalty, and over 30 percent agreed that they would not recommend working in their organization to others. These distributions indicated that sufficient variability existed in the affective commitment of these participants for subsequent statistical analyses to have theoretical meaning.

Scores on each item were standardized and summed to produce the affective commitment scale (as were item scores for intention to quit, job satisfaction, and work motivation). Cronbach's alpha values of these four scales were acceptably high: .79 for affective commitment, .73 for intention to quit, .75 for job satisfaction, and .64 for work motivation. As expected, intention to quit was most highly correlated with affective commitment ( $r = -.70$ ), and work motivation was the least correlated ( $r = .26$ ). These results built some confidence that the measure of the dependent variable in the first study was an appropriately valid and reliable assessment of respondents' affective commitment to their organizations.

A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was undertaken to identify a simple structure of factors underlying the psychological climate measures that were the focus of this study. As shown in Table 3, the resultant eight-factor solution matched the expected correspondence of all 26 items to their respective measures as reflected in higher factor loadings. The eight components extracted accounted for over 70 percent of the composite item variance, and the eigenvalues of all the rotated factors exceeded one. A set of eight factor scores was generated for respondents using the standard regression method. Also shown at the bottom of Table 3 is the Cronbach's alpha for each factor under the hypothetical circumstance that only the few highly loading (bolded) items were combined as a summative scale; in that case, reliability coefficients would range from .58 for job autonomy to .87 for social cohesion. However, since factor scores—estimated from all 26 items—were used to support this investigation, these alphas can be assumed to understate actual measurement reliability.

To assess whether the level of affective commitment varied across occupational groups, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with affective commitment as the dependent measure and occupational group as the independent measure. The three groups were found to differ significantly in affective commitment ( $F = 6.16$ ;  $p < .05$ ). In particular, professionals at salary grade 18 or above reported less affective commitment ( $M = -.78$ ) than either clerical workers below salary grade 18 ( $M = .63$ ) or managers ( $M = .54$ ).

Ordinary least square (OLS) regression analyses with affective commitment as the dependent measure and eight psychological climate factors as the independent measures were performed for all three groups of respondents<sup>3</sup>. The results of the OLS regression analyses are summarized in Table 4. The adjusted multiple coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ) were uniformly high (.55 for clerical workers, .63 for professionals, and .72 for

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<sup>3</sup> Data were examined to check whether employees' perception of psychological climate and affective commitment were clustered in 11 agencies; results of ANOVA and OLS regression analyses with robust standard error estimates provided no such evidence.

managers), indicating for all three groups that well over half to nearly three-quarters of the observed variability in affective commitment could be explained by the eight psychological climate measures.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 predicted that role and goal ambiguity will be negatively related to affective commitment. The results indicated that only managers' affective commitment was decreased by their perception of role ambiguity ( $\beta = -.29$ ). However, all three groups of employees' affective commitment was considerably reduced by their perception of goal ambiguity ( $\beta$ s =  $-.53$ ,  $-.56$  and  $-.54$  for the clerical workers, professionals, and managers, respectively). Hence, hypothesis 1 was partially supported and hypothesis 2 was fully supported by the results of this study.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 predicted that job challenge and autonomy will be positively related to affective commitment. The results showed that only job challenge had an effect on professional employees' affective commitment ( $\beta = .20$ ). Thus, hypothesis 3 was partially supported. Hypothesis 4 was not supported by the results; the level of job autonomy did not have any consequence for affective commitment.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 predicted that perceived supervisory support and greater ability to influence decision-making processes will be positively associated with affective commitment. Measures of both supervisory support and upward influence were evident predictors of affective commitment for professionals and managers ( $\beta$ s =  $.36$  and  $.27$ , respectively, for professionals, and  $\beta$ s =  $.20$  and  $.34$ , respectively, for managers). However, only upward influence was positively related to clerical workers' affective commitment ( $\beta = .39$ ). These results provided support for both hypotheses 5 and 6.

Hypotheses 7 and 8 predicted that social cohesion and perceptions of organizational fairness will be positively related to affective commitment. Measures of both social cohesion and organizational fairness were found to be important predictors of affective commitment in all three groups of employees. Perceptions of organizational fairness, even more than social cohesion, appeared to be especially predictive of professionals' and managers' affective commitment ( $\beta$ s =  $.38$  and  $.33$ , respectively), whereas social cohesion appeared to be more important than organizational fairness for improving clerical workers' affective commitment ( $\beta = .31$ ). These results provided support for hypotheses 7 and 8.

## STUDY TWO

### Research Method

The second study was conducted with an organizational survey of all employees in geographically dispersed offices of a state government agency. Data were gathered through the design and use of a unique, eight-page questionnaire for a population of 2614 employees. Responsibility for internal distribution and collection of questionnaires was assigned to division managers. Altogether, 2136 usable questionnaires were returned for an overall response rate of 82 percent; response rates from the 12 constituent divisions ranged from a low of 70 percent to a high of 100 percent.

A brief demographic overview of the respondents is provided in Tables 5 and 6. As shown in Table 5, 87 percent of the respondents identified themselves as Caucasian/White, 8 percent as African American/Black, 3 percent as Asian, 2 percent as Hispanic/Latino(a), and 1 percent as Native American/Alaskan Native; these percentages matched exactly the distribution generated from agency personnel records. Approximately 60 percent of the respondents were females and 40 percent males, nearly matching agency records of 59 percent female and 41 percent male. With regard to position description, 31 percent of the respondents reported their job was best described as clerical or support, 47 percent as professional or technical, and 19 percent as managerial or executive. Personnel records suggested that somewhat fewer numbers of professional and clerical employees returned questionnaires, since they accounted for about 90 percent of the workforce. Salary grade level, however, provided an additional measure of the nature of respondents' job responsibilities: 38 percent were in salary grade level 17 or below, 45 percent in salary grade levels 18 to 25, and 14 percent above; this matched the salary grade distribution from agency records within 1 percent. As shown in Table 6, the mean age of the respondents was 45.6 years; their mean tenures in their current positions, in their divisions, and in the agency were 4.8 years, 9.8 years, and 11.6 years, respectively; all three tenure distributions were skewed quite positively.

Respondents completed a 130-item questionnaire designed in large part to examine employees' perceptions of the psychological climate in the organization, as well their affective commitment to the agency. In addition to the variables relevant in the second study, data were collected for other agency, office and individual level variables, the analysis of which is beyond the scope of this paper. Items for all of the variables were measured either on a six-point (coded 1-6) strength of agreement (strongly disagree, generally disagree, disagree a little, agree a little, generally agree, and strongly agree) or a five-point (coded 0-4) frequency of occurrence (almost never/never, rarely, sometimes,

often, and almost always/always) scale. A complete list of the items included in each measure used in the present study is provided in the Appendix. In all important respects, the independent and dependent measures incorporated in the second study were parallel in their origin and form to those described above for Study One. A complete list of the items included in each measure is provided in the Appendix.

## **Results**

Item-level responses to the dependent measure of affective commitment were relatively positive in this large and diversified government agency. More than two-thirds of the respondents agreed that they were proud to be a part of their organizations, and less than one-fifth expressed any difficulty in agreeing with the policies of their organizations. While this suggests that these employees generally thought favorably of their organizations, approximately 20 percent also agreed that their organization does very little to deserve their loyalty, and that they would not recommend working in their organization to others. These distributions indicated that adequate variability existed in the affective commitment of these participants for subsequent statistical analyses to have theoretical meaning.

A principal components analysis with an oblimin rotation was undertaken to identify the structure of factors underlying the psychological climate measures that were the focus of the present study. As shown in Table 7, the resultant eight-factor solution matched the expected correspondence of all 24 items to their respective measures as reflected in higher factor loadings. The eight components extracted accounted for over 66 percent of the composite item variance. A set of eight factor scores was generated for respondents using the standard regression method. An oblimin rotation generates oblique factors, but in this case the factor scores were not highly correlated. As shown in Table 8, the median correlation between the factors was .21, indicating that typically less than five percent of variance in pairs of factors was shared. A reliability check was made by creating three-item summative scales based on the components for each factor. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alphas) for these scales ranged from .62 for job autonomy to .92 for job challenge. A separate principal components analysis was performed to create the dependent measure of affective commitment. The resultant factor extracted accounted for over 68 percent of the composite item variance and factor loadings on all the four items were above .75. Factor scores for affective commitment also were generated using the standard regression method. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for a four-item

summative scale of affective commitment was .79. All results reported below were based on standardized factor scores.

In parallel with the first study, respondents in the second study also were divided into three groups based on the nature of their self-reported position and salary grade. Clerical/support employees below salary grade 18 formed the first group (n = 439). Professional/technical employees at salary grade 18 or above were placed in the second group (n = 814). Managerial/executive employees (also at salary grade 18 or above) comprised the group (n = 324). The three groups were found to differ somewhat in affective commitment; managers and executives reported somewhat greater affective commitment (M = .17) than professionals (M = .03) or clerical workers (M = -.11). These differences were not as large as those reported above for the first study.

Ordinary least square regression analyses with organizational commitment as the dependent measure and eight psychological climate factors as the independent measures were completed for all three groups of agency respondents. Multiple coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ) were uniformly high (.62 for clerical, .58 for professional, and .64 for managerial), indicating for all three groups that nearly two-thirds of the observed variability in organizational commitment could be predicted from measures of psychological climate. Because these employee groups were not samples but represented the entire populations of clerical/support, professional/technical, and managerial/executive employees, the standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ) generated in these models should be considered as approximations of population parameters for the agency rather than as sample statistics. For this reason, tests of statistical significance would be inappropriate. Nevertheless, a significance level of  $p < .01$  was used merely as a heuristic device, since it was associated with any regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of a magnitude of .10 or larger, that is, marking any measure of psychological climate for which an increase of one standard deviation unit would predict at least an increase of one-tenth of a standard deviation unit in organizational commitment.

As shown in Table 9, levels of affective commitment for all three groups of employees were reduced by perceptions of goal ambiguity ( $\beta = -.39, -.31$  and  $-.23$  for the clerical, professional, and managerial employees, respectively). However, only professional/technical employees' affective commitment was decreased by their perception of role ambiguity ( $\beta = -.11$ ). Both job characteristics measures had only a marginal effect on the level of affective commitment for clerical/support and managerial/executive employees; job challenge had only a slightly larger effect for professional/technical employees ( $\beta = .10$ ). Supervisory support and upward influence were evident predictors of

affective commitment of both clerical/support and managerial/executive employees ( $\beta = .13$  and  $.15$ , respectively for clerical, and  $\beta = .11$  and  $.21$ , respectively, for managers). The level of affective commitment of the professional/technical group, however, was only marginally affected by these two measures of leadership. Both measures of social environment characteristics were associated markedly with the strength of organizational commitment in all three groups. Perceptions of organizational fairness, even more than cohesion and morale, appeared to be especially predictive for clerical, professional, and managerial employees ( $\beta = .26$ ,  $.30$ , and  $.24$ , respectively).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The common goal of both studies presented here was to examine how the proximal work environment influences organizational commitment in public agencies. Unlike previous work (e.g., Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Park and Rainey 2007; Reid et al. 2008, 2008; Robertson et al. 2007; Yang and Pandey 2008), these studies relied on a more integrated theoretical approach to examine the sources of organizational commitment for multiple occupational groups in public agencies. Joint results provided support for a large portion of the theoretical framework; seven of the eight psychological climate measures were found to have a meaningful and relevant relationship with the measure of organizational commitment. Only employees' reports of the extent of their job autonomy appeared to be unconnected empirically to affective commitment. The proportion of variance in affective commitment explained by the eight psychological climate measures in both studies was considerable—from well over half to nearly three-quarters.

A comparison of results from the first and second studies indicated that three measures in two psychological climate domains—social environment characteristics and role stress and lack of harmony—were particularly important in predicting all employees' affective commitment regardless of occupational group: social cohesion, organizational fairness, and goal ambiguity. In fact, goal ambiguity proved to be the most salient predictor measure in five of the six OLS regression models reported in Tables 4 and 9. While the domain of leadership facilitation and support appeared moderately important in accounting for variation in commitment levels, challenge and autonomy clearly was the least important psychological climate domain in its contribution to any of the three occupational models. The paired measures within each domain of psychological climate, however, did not uniformly influence employees' affective commitment. For example, goal ambiguity appeared more connected to commitment than role ambiguity (in the domain of role stress and lack of harmony), and upward influence appeared more connected to

organizational commitment than supervisory support (in the domain of leadership support and facilitation), particularly in the first study.

The combined results of these studies demonstrated that the strength of association between measures of psychological climate and affective commitment clearly varied across occupational groups and in ways not previously documented. For example, job challenge was found to be positively associated with professionals' affective commitment but did not influence either clerical workers' or managers' affective commitment. This finding might be anticipated in future studies, as well, because professionals such as engineers, lawyers and accountants often expect to perform more highly specialized work than managers or clerical workers in public agencies. The greater opportunity to do work that is highly challenging and stimulating, therefore, should lead professionals to be committed to organizations that encourage such work. In addition, professionals' reports of the extent of upward organizational influence appeared to be less connected to their level of affective commitment than employees in either the clerical or managerial groups.

The degree of organizational commitment of managers and executives was traced most fully to the nature of the psychological climate that they perceived; the  $R^2$  for the two OLS managerial models were the highest of the three occupational groups in each study (.72 as shown in Table 4 and .64 as shown in Table 9). This finding can be attributed to the fact that a large portion of the domains of psychological climate appeared to be engaged in an explanation of managers' commitment to their organizations, that is, six of the eight predictors in the first study and five of these predictors in the second study. Mixed results across were produced for the influence of greater role ambiguity on reduced managerial commitment; role ambiguity was a significant and negative predictor measure in the first study but seemed inconsequential in the second study.

Rather than attempting to estimate direct and indirect effects through structural equation modeling as have Eby et al. (1999), Park and Rainey (2007), and Yang and Pandey (2008), the research approach of these studies was paradoxically both more limited and more ambitious. With respect to "more limited," the framework did not attempt to stipulate connections that in all likelihood exist among the psychological climate variables in any particular organization; such modeling would be well beyond the scope of the research designs. With respect to "more ambitious," however, any successful effort to establish statistical conclusion validity must hinge in part on a meaningful capacity to control multicollinearity. This is no easy accomplishment in organizational research where correlations sometimes reach a magnitude near the ceiling of the scale reliabilities

themselves. By factor analyzing items to produce eight relatively uncorrelated psychological climate measures, the present studies were able to approximate the unique contribution of each toward a better understanding of why affective commitment varies in three occupational groups of government employees.

The psychological climate model, although promising, has limitations. As noted earlier, psychological climate is an individual-level construct and does not reflect employees' shared perception of their work environment. Such perception, however, is likely to influence work attitudes including affective commitment. A logical extension of this research, therefore, would be to examine how group-level constructs such as organizational climate influence employees' organizational commitment in public agencies. Further, cross-sectional studies such as these, of course, cannot investigate the development of affective commitment over time. To understand organizational dynamics well, future research must examine the relationship between psychological climate and affective commitment using a longitudinal design.

The combined results presented here, however, have at least two important implications for management practice. A key overall finding of was that greater goal ambiguity appeared to generate the most negative consequence for lowering affective commitment in all three occupational groups. This finding suggests that reducing goal ambiguity is one of the more critical factors for enhancing organizational commitment in public agencies. Reducing goal ambiguity, however, is a difficult challenge in government agencies, because goals serve multiple purposes and represent competing interests of various stakeholders (Meyers et al. 2001). Nevertheless, as suggested in previous public administration research (see, for example, Meyers et al. 2001; Rainey and Steinbauer 1999; Riccucci 1996), effective leadership can play an important role in reducing goal ambiguity in public agencies. Managers in public agencies should direct their efforts to clarifying agencies' missions and goals to their subordinates, building consensus about agencies' goals in their work units, setting specific work objectives and identifying feasible ways to achieve them.

Another important finding of both studies was that social cohesion and organizational fairness appeared important for all three occupational groups' affective commitment. This finding suggests that establishing a cohesive and fair work environment is critical for enhancing public sector employees' organizational commitment. Such an environment would motivate them to engage in cooperative and extra-role behaviors on behalf of their employing organizations.

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**Figure 1**  
**Four Domains of Psychological Climate**

<p align="center"><b>Role Stress and Lack of Harmony</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Role Ambiguity</i> <i>Goal Ambiguity</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Leadership Facilitation and Support</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Supervisory Support</i> <i>Upward Influence</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Challenge and Autonomy</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Job Challenge</i> <i>Job Autonomy</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Social Environment Characteristics</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Social Cohesion</i> <i>Organizational Fairness</i></p>

**Table 1**  
**Study One: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Asian	1.6%
Black	2.3%
Hispanic	3.1%
Native American	1.2%
White	89.5%
Other	2.3%
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	51.3%
Male	48.7%
<b>Education</b>	
Some high school	0.8%
High school diploma	12.5%
Some college/technical school	25.3%
B.A., B.S., or other college degree	26.4%
Some graduate work	13.6%
MA, M.S. or other graduate degree	19.6%
Doctorate	1.9%
<b>Nature of Position</b>	
Clerical/support	23.1%
Professional/technical	50.0%
Manager	21.2%
Senior manager/executive	5.7%
<b>Salary Grade</b>	
Grades 6-13	18.5%
Grades 14-17	14.7%
Grades 18-25/MI	47.9%
Grades 26-31/M2-3	14.0%
Grades 32-35/M4	4.9%

**Table 2**  
**Study One: Age and Tenure of Respondents**

	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Age	21	71	47.1	7.8
Years in current position	1	34	7.8	6.4
Year in agency	1	37	15.9	8.5
Year in state government	1	41	20.9	8.1

**Table 3**  
**Study One: Factor Pattern Matrix for Independent Measures**

Items	Social Cohesion	Goal Ambiguity	Supervisory Support	Job Challenge	Role Ambiguity	Upward Influence	Organizational Fairness	Job Autonomy
There are serious disagreements among employees (R)*	<b>0.82</b>	-0.07	0.10	0.03	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.04
We get along well with each other in this office	<b>0.81</b>	-0.18	0.23	0.05	-0.11	0.09	0.06	-0.04
Employees where I work trust and support each other	<b>0.80</b>	-0.06	0.14	-0.01	-0.22	0.10	0.16	0.10
A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists here	<b>0.79</b>	-0.10	0.19	0.05	-0.19	0.16	0.19	0.08
It is hard to understand the overall goals of this organization	-0.12	<b>0.81</b>	-0.12	-0.04	0.06	-0.19	-0.11	-0.08
This organization seems to be without central purpose or apparent direction	-0.06	<b>0.77</b>	-0.18	0.00	0.09	0.05	-0.28	-0.04
I can clearly explain to others the direction (vision, values, and mission) of this organization (R)	-0.02	<b>0.75</b>	-0.05	-0.13	0.05	-0.18	-0.02	0.02
This organization has objectives that are specific and well defined (R)	-0.18	<b>0.71</b>	0.02	-0.07	0.17	-0.01	-0.11	-0.02
My supervisor provides good leadership	0.17	-0.06	<b>0.81</b>	0.03	-0.18	0.21	0.10	0.12
My supervisor takes little personal interest in those he/she supervises (R)	0.26	-0.10	<b>0.80</b>	0.11	-0.07	0.17	0.00	0.05
I can depend on my supervisor to keep the commitments he/she makes	0.21	-0.15	<b>0.74</b>	0.02	-0.18	0.12	0.21	0.11
My work is very challenging	0.08	-0.10	0.09	<b>0.84</b>	-0.12	0.10	0.08	-0.02
My job is easy (R)	-0.03	-0.01	0.07	<b>0.79</b>	0.15	-0.30	-0.04	0.10
Day after day my on-the-job tasks are almost the same (R)	0.04	-0.03	-0.02	<b>0.73</b>	0.22	0.27	-0.02	0.10
I get an opportunity to do new and different things at work	0.02	-0.17	0.03	<b>0.63</b>	-0.11	0.47	0.16	-0.07
I know exactly what I am supposed to do on my job (R)	-0.18	0.03	-0.06	0.06	<b>0.83</b>	-0.06	0.04	-0.02
I understand fully which of my job duties are more important than others (R)	-0.05	0.18	-0.16	-0.06	<b>0.75</b>	-0.08	-0.10	-0.17
My responsibilities at work are very clear and specific (R)	-0.27	0.22	-0.22	0.21	<b>0.65</b>	-0.04	-0.05	-0.12
Employees take part in making decisions regarding their work objectives	0.17	-0.07	0.25	0.07	-0.22	<b>0.71</b>	0.15	0.04
Important decisions are made top down without any consultation (R)	0.11	-0.20	0.36	0.07	0.10	<b>0.60</b>	0.14	0.29
There is very little opportunity to participate in decisions about work methods and procedures (R)	0.32	-0.21	0.20	0.18	-0.04	<b>0.58</b>	0.05	0.32
Personnel decisions are influenced by factors like ethnicity, age, or gender of employees (R)	0.13	-0.10	0.10	0.04	-0.01	-0.06	<b>0.81</b>	0.12
This organization tries very hard to give equal opportunities to all employees	0.14	-0.25	0.06	0.05	-0.05	0.27	<b>0.71</b>	-0.11
Employees are treated fairly in this organization	0.25	-0.28	0.20	0.03	-0.06	0.33	<b>0.56</b>	-0.01
In my job even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final answer (R)	0.11	0.00	0.20	0.07	-0.04	0.02	0.05	<b>0.84</b>
I always must check with my supervisor before making important decisions (R)	0.00	-0.07	0.01	0.02	-0.20	0.19	-0.02	<b>0.75</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>.68</b>	<b>.76</b>	<b>.74</b>	<b>.73</b>	<b>.83</b>	<b>.87</b>	<b>.74</b>	<b>.58</b>

**Table 4**  
**Study One: OLS Models for Affective Commitment--**  
**Standardized Regression Coefficients ( $\beta$ )**

<b>Domains of Psychological Climate</b>		<b>Clerical</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Managerial</b>
<b>Role Stress and Lack of Harmony</b>	<i>Role Ambiguity</i>	-0.14	-0.09	-0.29*
	<i>Goal Ambiguity</i>	-0.53*	-0.56*	-0.54*
<b>Challenge and Autonomy</b>	<i>Job Challenge</i>	0.04	0.20*	0.01
	<i>Job Autonomy</i>	0.03	0.01	0.11
<b>Leadership Facilitation and Support</b>	<i>Supervisory Support</i>	0.15	0.36*	0.20*
	<i>Upward Influence</i>	0.39*	0.27*	0.34*
<b>Social Environment Characteristics</b>	<i>Social Cohesion</i>	0.31*	0.17*	0.24*
	<i>Organizational Fairness</i>	0.20*	0.38*	0.33*
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>0.55</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.72</b>

\*  $p < .05$

**Table 5**  
**Study Two: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Asian	3%
Black	8%
Hispanic	2%
Native American	1%
White	87%
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	60%
Male	40%
<b>Nature of Position</b>	
Clerical/support	34%
Professional/technical	47%
Managerial	14%
<b>Salary Grade</b>	
NS	3%
Grades 6-13	24%
Grades 14-17	14%
Grades 18-25/MI	45%
Grades 26-31/M2-3	11%
Grades 32-35/M4	3%

**Table 6**  
**Study Two: Age and Tenure of Respondents**

	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Age	20	74	45.6	11.2
Years in current position	1	36	4.8	5.6
Years in the current division	1	40	9.8	9.6
Years in agency	1	42	11.6	10.5

**Table 7**  
**Study Two: Factor Pattern Matrix for Independent Measures**

Items	Organizational Fairness	Job Challenge	Role Ambiguity	Goal Ambiguity	Supervisory Support	Social Cohesion	Upward Influence	Job Autonomy
Employee recognition is fair and equitable	<b>.79</b>	-.06	.05	-.10	.00	-.07	.09	.02
Performance evaluations are fair and equitable	<b>.77</b>	.04	-.03	-.00	.08	.10	-.07	-.02
Career opportunities are fair and equitable	<b>.72</b>	.12	-.05	.05	-.01	.07	.11	-.02
Day after day my on-the-job tasks are almost the same (R)	.07	<b>-.79</b>	-.19	.04	-.01	-.03	-.19	-.03
My work is very challenging	.08	<b>.76</b>	-.13	-.09	-.07	.01	-.20	-.06
I get an opportunity to do new and different things at work	.10	<b>.74</b>	-.00	-.02	.11	.05	.05	-.00
My responsibilities at work are very clear and specific (R)	.13	-.02	<b>-.67</b>	-.05	.13	.08	-.06	-.01
I understand fully which of my job duties are more important than others (R)	-.05	.10	<b>-.79</b>	.01	.03	-.02	.11	.06
I know exactly what I am supposed to do on my job (R)	-.01	-.13	<b>-.82</b>	-.08	-.05	.01	-.04	-.04
This division has objectives that are specific and well defined (R)	.14	-.03	-.13	<b>-.66</b>	.02	.09	-.03	-.01
I understand this agency's mission and goals. (R)	-.10	.08	-.02	<b>-.87</b>	.05	-.04	-.03	.04
It is hard to understand the overall goals of this organization	-.11	-.04	-.03	<b>.72</b>	-.02	-.07	-.09	.03
I am told by my immediate supervisor when I do a good job	.13	.03	-.11	.12	<b>.78</b>	.03	-.04	.05
I am encouraged by my supervisor to keep my skills up-to-date	.01	.09	-.05	-.13	<b>.73</b>	-.04	-.04	-.00
My supervisor takes little personal interest in those he/she supervises (R)	.05	.12	-.07	.08	<b>-.80</b>	-.08	-.10	.05
Employees where I work trust and support each other	.03	.06	.02	.01	.09	<b>.78</b>	-.03	-.02
We get along well with each other in this office	-.03	.01	-.03	.02	.06	<b>.87</b>	-.10	-.02
There are serious disagreements among employees (R)	-.01	.04	-.01	.06	.12	<b>-.80</b>	-.12	-.05
There is very little opportunity to participate in decisions about work methods and procedures (R)	-.05	-.20	.06	-.01	-.19	-.09	<b>-.51</b>	.09
Important decisions are made "top down" without any consultation (R)	-.17	-.04	.03	.02	-.07	-.03	<b>-.69</b>	-.04
Rules, administrative details, and "red tape" make it difficult for new ideas to receive attention (R)	-.18	.14	.05	.23	.04	-.11	<b>-.53</b>	.10
I have the authority to change my work processes to get the job done	-.06	.00	-.11	-.01	-.01	.04	.15	<b>.94</b>
In my job even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final answer (R)	-.06	.29	-.23	.09	.14	.01	.27	<b>-.34</b>
I always must check with my supervisor before making important decisions (R)	.07	.02	.14	.03	.03	-.08	-.23	<b>-.66</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>.77</b>	<b>.92</b>	<b>.73</b>	<b>.77</b>	<b>.85</b>	<b>.75</b>	<b>.66</b>	<b>.62</b>

**Table 8**  
**Study Two: Eight-factor Correlation Matrix from Oblimin Rotation**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
1 Organizational Fairness							
2 Job Challenge	0.15						
3 Role Ambiguity	-0.20	0.10					
4 Goal Ambiguity	-0.37	0.14	0.29				
5 Supervisory Support	0.32	-0.29	-0.32	0.21			
6 Social Cohesion	0.41	-0.18	-0.27	0.33	0.37		
7 Upward Influence	0.28	-0.17	-0.14	0.20	0.23	0.30	
8 Job Autonomy	0.08	-0.19	-0.24	0.04	0.17	0.18	.21

**Table 9**  
**Study Two: OLS Models for Affective Commitment--**  
**Standardized Regression Coefficients ( $\beta$ )**

<b>Domains of Psychological Climate</b>		<b>Clerical (n = 439 )</b>	<b>Professional (n = 814)</b>	<b>Managerial (n = 324 )</b>
<b>Role Stress and Lack of Harmony</b>	<i>Role Ambiguity</i>	-.08	-.11*	-.08
	<i>Goal Ambiguity</i>	-.39*	-.31*	-.23*
<b>Challenge and Autonomy</b>	<i>Job Challenge</i>	.04	.10*	.08
	<i>Job Autonomy</i>	.05	.01	.06
<b>Leadership Facilitation and Support</b>	<i>Supervisory Support</i>	.13*	.06	.11*
	<i>Upward Influence</i>	.15*	.08	.21*
<b>Social Environment Characteristics</b>	<i>Social Cohesion</i>	.18*	.21*	.24*
	<i>Organizational Fairness</i>	.26*	.30*	.24*
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>.62</b>	<b>.58</b>	<b>.64</b>

## APPENDIX

### ***Scales used in both Study One and Two***

#### **Affective Commitment**

I would not recommend working here to others (R)  
This organization does very little to deserve my loyalty (R)  
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization  
It is difficult for me to agree with the policies of this organization (R)

### ***Scales used in Study One***

#### **Job Satisfaction**

I am very satisfied with the kind of work that I do  
At least for now, my current position is well suited to my needs  
I would not recommend working here to others

#### **Intention to Quit**

I think about getting a different job  
I would quit this organization tomorrow if it were possible (R)

#### **Work Motivation**

I put forth my best effort to get my job done regardless of the difficulties (R)  
I am willing to start work early or stay late to finish a job (R)  
It has been hard for me to get very involved in my current job  
I probably do not work as hard as others who do the same type of work  
I do extra work for my job that isn't really expected of me  
Time seems to drag while I am on the job

#### **Supervisory Support**

My supervisor provides good leadership  
My supervisor takes little personal interest in those he/she supervises (R)  
I can depend on my supervisor to keep the commitments he/she makes

#### **Goal Ambiguity**

It is hard to understand the overall goals of this organization  
This organization seems to be without central purpose or apparent direction  
I can clearly explain to others the direction (vision, values, and mission) of this organization  
This organization has objectives that are specific and well defined

#### **Organizational Fairness**

Personnel decisions are influenced by factors like ethnicity, age, or gender of employees (R)  
This organization tries very hard to give equal opportunities to all employees  
Employees are treated fairly in this organization

#### **Job Autonomy**

In my job even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final answer (R)  
I always must check with my supervisor before making important decisions (R)

#### **Social Cohesion**

There are serious disagreements among employees (R)  
We get along well with each other in this office  
Employees where I work trust and support each other  
A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists here

**Upward Influence**

Employees take part in making decisions regarding their work objectives  
Important decisions are made top down without any consultation(R)  
There is very little opportunity to participate in decisions about work methods and procedures(R)

**Job Challenge**

My work is very challenging  
My job is easy  
Day after day my on-the-job tasks are almost the same(R)  
I get an opportunity to do new and different things at work

**Scales used in Study Two****Role Ambiguity**

I know exactly what I am supposed to do on my job(R)  
I understand fully which of my job duties are more important than others(R)  
My responsibilities at work are very clear and specific(R)

**Goal Ambiguity**

This division has objectives that are specific and well defined(R)  
I understand this agency's mission and goals(R)  
It is hard to understand the overall goals of this organization

**Job Challenge**

Day after day my on-the-job tasks are almost the same(R)  
My work is very challenging  
I get an opportunity to do new and different things at work

**Job Autonomy**

I always must check with my supervisor before making important decisions(R)  
I have the authority to change my work processes to get the job done  
In my job even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final answer(R)

**Supervisory Support**

I am told by my immediate supervisor when I do a good job  
I am encouraged by my supervisor to keep my skills up-to-date  
My supervisor takes little personal interest in those he/she supervises(R)

**Upward Influence**

There is very little opportunity to participate in decisions about work methods and procedures(R)  
Important decisions are made "top down" without any consultation(R)  
Rules, administrative details, and red tape make it difficult for new ideas to receive attention(R)

**Social Cohesion**

Employees where I work trust and support each other  
We get along well with each other in this office  
There are serious disagreements among employees (R)

**Organizational Fairness**

Employee recognition is fair and equitable  
Performance evaluations are fair and equitable  
Career opportunities are fair and equitable