

# Development Of Scale For Ethical Climate Questionnaire Applicable To Higher Educational Institutions

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**Abstract:** Concept of ethical climate is highly effective in an organizational sense. A questionnaire to measure ethical climate based on survey is very much need of the hour. In this regard, surveys were conducted with the developed questionnaire of 49 items and 12 dimensions. This was further refined in the final study to 36 items and 9 dimensions based on the 236 survey samples. Reliability of questionnaire has been established by computing Cronbach's alpha at higher educational institutions. A comprehensive questionnaire has been developed for the ethical climate in higher educational institutes in south western parts of India taking in to account the responses from latest survey.

**Index Terms:** Ethical climate, Higher education, Scale construction, Scale development, Reliability, Mean, Standard deviation

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In today's world, all the organisations are either wanting to maintain the existing values in their respective domains or are striving hard to reach to a level of better value system. In this scenario, understanding of the ethical climate will definitely give directions for any organisation. Individuals can use the opportunity to make better decisions in cases of moral dilemma. Ethical climate when implemented, can identify the issues or grey areas in the work environment at all levels of the company. This can monitor complete functioning of the firm and there by observing the behaviour of all the concerned people under variety of situations. There has to be systems that will have a control on the ethics followed in an organisation. Ethical behaviour of an individual will drive him in the perceived direction towards the firm. Psychologists have strongly argued on the role of ethical issues as most powerful influence on the individual working in the firm. The perception of right behaviour is a part of ethical climate. This gives rise to a mechanism where in moral issues will be taken care of. Employees will get to know about the ethics climate at the earliest and will plan the actions based on the implications of right and wrong deeds. The ethical climate in any organisation is very critical to its unity and integrity. The concept of ethical climate is a must in any organisation. It is a broad umbrella comprising of values, procedures and practices linked to ethical issues. This highlights the desired actions and behaviors to be taken to safeguard moral values.

## 2 LITERATURE SURVEY

Ethical climate represents the correct behaviours and it is based on the image built-up by the organisation as to how will it overcome the problem. Ethical climate is a set of definitions about the proper behaviours perceived in terms of an organization's image about how a problem can be overcome when faced with a problem. A study on ethical climate was carried out with three levels and three points of analysis. This resulted in nine items include, self-interest, company profit, efficiency, friendship, team interest, social responsibility, personal morality, company rules and procedures, and laws and professional codes [1]. This process was continued further and questionnaire on ethical climate was prepared. Empirical data collected was used to validate the topology. It was observed that number of items were reduced from nine to five based on the data collected. The new list of items included instrumental, caring, independence, rules, law and code. Reflection of ethical work climate can be clearly seen in the behaviours of employees in the organisation in terms of moral reasoning and ethical actions [2]. Authors further worked on the questionnaire for ethical climate but number of items considered were seven [3]. Researchers emphasized that satisfactory level of ethical climate improves the performance of employees. This was observed in the study conducted in the athletic department. moral values followed by directors of athletic departments will automatically urge the employees to follow the same [4], [5], [6]. When right process is followed during hiring, rewarding and promotion of employees, ethical behaviour will improve further. One of the researcher opined that ethical climate is also about resolving the controversy created by the moral issues and can be addressed by right behaviour ethically [7]. Ethical climate guidelines will help in correcting the behaviour of the organisation [8]. Ethical climate questionnaire was also used in public sector and an empirical assessment technique was adopted [9]. Appropriate rules and procedures for all the actions in the organisation will guide the employees to work meaningfully by exhibiting positivity in their actions without any conflicts. Ethical climate is also put forth as a judgement on appropriate behaviour and it becomes a mechanism which works on psychology of the employees where issues related to ethics are addressed [10]. Research was carried to investigate the effect of ethical climate of the organisation on the attitudes of the employee [11]. Ethical climate is characterised by the ethical actions and decision

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making [12]. A questionnaire to measure ethical climate in both public and private sector in south African context was developed empirically and it was found that construct was equivalent for both sectors [13].

### 3 METHODS

The process involved collection data in the form surveys. Good number of samples were collected from compared. Teaching staffs from different higher educational institutions participated in the survey. The questionnaires were decided for each item after collecting 50 samples. The pilot study was conducted on questionnaires prepared for 77 samples. The final survey included 236 samples, these questionnaires was distributed to teaching faculty completing their research at higher educational institution. Total number of items in the questionnaire was reduced to 36 from earlier 49 on the basis of mean and standard deviation. There are three prominent stages in this process, namely, scale development for ethical climate, scale testing and validation.

### 4 SCALE DEVELOPMENT FOR ETHICAL CLIMATE

But researcher decided scale development to Ethical climate

for that pilot study and the questionnaire are distributed at MBA College and Engineering college teaching faculty. Whether the questionnaires convey the meaning. But the researcher wants to develop this scale by 12 to 9 dimension as shown in figure 1. But originally it was 5 dimension and 49 items selected for the pilot study. The questionnaire is administered using 5-point Likert Scale (1= Never convey, 5 = Highly convey) to represent their agreement with each item as shown in Table 1. The process before finalizing the Ethical Climate Questionnaires Checking the meaning statement is provided. The finalized 49 items and 12 dimensions for scale development are given below and it has taken one week to get back the questionnaire respondent 50 sample. Please indicate whether the following statements convey the meaning for the sample of N=50.

**TABLE 1**  
ORIGINAL 5-POINT LIKERT SCALE

Never Convey	Somewhat Unlikely convey	Somewhat convey	Mostly Convey	Highly convey
1	2	3	4	5

**TABLE 2**  
ETHICAL CLIMATE QUESTIONNAIRES STATEMENT CHECKING CONVEY THE MEANING

Dimension of Ethical Climate	Ethical Climate Questionnaires (ECQ)	Mean N 50	Std. Deviation (SD)
Caring	Everyone in this organisation follows best is the major consideration.	3.630435	0.878349
	Wellbeing of all the people is most important concern in this organisation	3.782609	0.96409
	Best for other person is our major concern.	3.717391	1.02552
	People observe each other's good in this organisation.	3.369565	1.122669
	You are always expected to do what is right for the customers and public in this organisation.	3.978261	1.043267
	I would accept a permanent, full time job even if I knew I could only stay for a few months.	3.108696	1.286308
Law & code	People are expected to comply with the law and professional standards over and above other considerations.	3.913043	0.838679
	The major consideration in this organisation is law or ethical code of their profession	4.173913	0.676736
	People are expected to strictly follow professional or legal standards	4.173913	0.851257
	Before considering anything on decision violates any law or not in the organisation.	3.717391	0.981225
	I would never copy software without getting permission from the publisher.	3.630435	1.322602
Rules	Rules and procedures are very important to follow in this organisation.	4.195652	0.833188
	Rules and procedures of the organisation is expected to be followed by everyone.	4.108696	0.971328
	Successful people in this organisation go by the book.	3.065217	0.997824
	Policies in this organisation has to be strictly followed by the people.	3.543478	0.935866

	If I felt sexually attracted to a job candidate with lesser qualifications than the others, I wouldn't let that influence my hiring decision.	3	1.605546
Instrumental	People try to protect their interest other than anything else in this organisation.	3.217391	1.153026
	Whatever the consequences, individuals are expected to do anything for the interest of the organisation.	3.130435	1.27556
	Organisation's interest is most important for the people excluding all else.	3.217391	0.96409
	Work is considered substandard only when it hurts the organisation's interests.	3	1.032796
	The major responsibility of individuals in this organisation is to control costs.	3.282609	1.128678
	I would never take home paper clips, stationery or other office supplies.	3.326087	1.46142
Independence	Personal and moral beliefs are expected to be followed by the people of this organisation.	3.021739	1.238083
	What is right and wrong for themselves is decided by the individual in this organisation	3.021739	1.220002
	Individual's sense of right or wrong is most important concern in this organisation.	3.456522	1.109685
	Individuals are guided by own personal ethics in the organisation.	3.347826	1.119869
Efficiency	Always right way is the most efficient way in this organisation.	3.369565	0.951226
	The major responsibility of people in this organisation is to consider efficiency first.	3.413043	1.165735
	Individual is expected to work efficiently above all in this organisation	3.608696	1.043035
	In this organisation, for any problems efficient solutions are sought.	3.391304	0.906232
Self interest	In this company, people are mostly out for themselves.	3.130435	1.107724
	Individual's morale or ethics is given no importance in this organisation	2.934783	0.975299
	In this company, people protect their own interest above other considerations.	3.086957	1.189324
	People in this company are very concerned about what is best for themselves	3.217391	1.133589
	When making decisions, it is expected that everyone's care will be taken in this organisation	3.76087	0.99297
	I would never copy software without getting permission from the publisher.	3.630435	1.322602
	If I didn't win the promotion I would be inclined to slack off when working for the guy who did.	2.673913	1.174816
Service	Effects of decisions on customer	3.608696	0.906232
	People concerned about customer	3.913043	0.914721
	Always do what is right for customer	3.978261	0.954268
	Persons expected to work efficiently	4.065217	0.904364
Social responsibility	It is expected that you will always do what is right for the customer and public.	4.021739	0.906498
	In this organisation, individuals have high sense of responsibility towards outside community	4	0.918937
	Interest of the customer and public are given more concern by people in this organisation.	3.847826	0.842414
	Primary concern in this organisation is the effect of decisions on customer and public.	3.804348	1.0877

Company profit	People in this company view team spirit as important.	3.934783	0.904364
	Decisions here are primarily viewed in terms of contribution to profit	3.434783	1.088366
Team Interest	People are concerned about what is generally best for employees in the company.	3.521739	0.887922
Friendship	What is best for each individual is a primary concern of the organization.	3.521739	1.0053
Range of Mean and Standard deviation (SD)		2.673913 to 4.195652	0.676736 to 1.322602

**TABLE 3**  
**REVISED 5-POINT LIKERT SCALE**

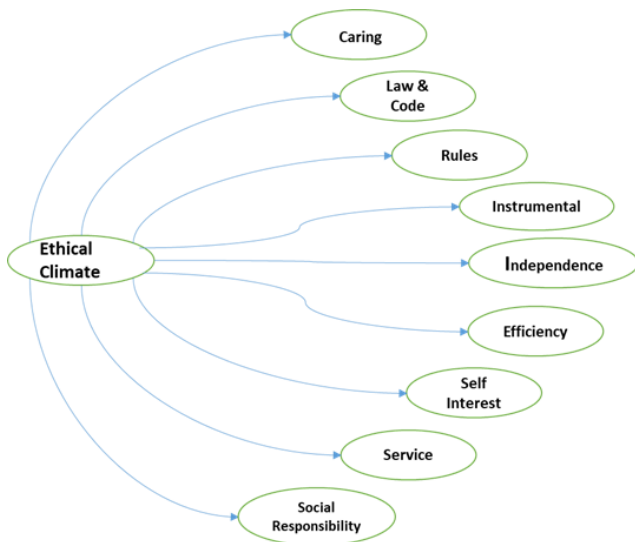
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

**TABLE 4**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ETHICAL CLIMATE ITEMS AND ITS RELIABILITY OF SMALL AND LARGER SAMPLE WITH REFERENCE TO HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

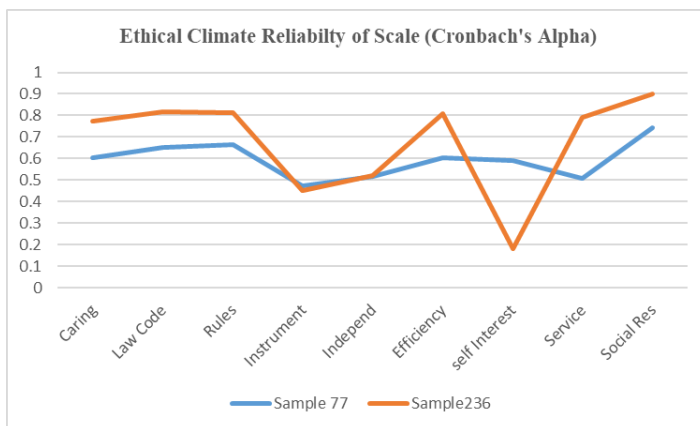
Dimension	Ethical Climate Questionnaire	Pilot study N=77		Cronbach's Alpha	Final study N=236		Cronbach's Alpha
		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
Caring	Wellbeing of all the people is most important concern in this organisation	3.87	0.848	0.603	4.157	0.786	0.7729
	Best for other person is our major concern.	3.43	0.865		3.682	0.897	
	Everyone in this organisation follows best is the major consideration.	3.65	0.970		3.890	0.907	
	People observe each other's good in this organisation.	3.35	1.061		3.500	0.970	
	I would accept a permanent, full time job even if I knew I could only stay for a few months and cares about work.	3.10	1.420		3.614	1.023	
Law and Code	In this organisation, the law or ethical code of their profession is the major consideration.	4.10	0.804	0.651	3.936	0.856	0.8157
	In this organisation, people are expected to strictly follow legal or professional standards.	4.29	0.758		4.055	0.805	

	People are expected to comply with the law and professional standards over and above other considerations.	4.00	0.688		3.898	0.834	
	Before considering anything on decision violates any law or not in the organisation.	3.96	0.677		3.661	0.934	
	I would never copy software without getting permission from the publisher.	4.03	0.959		4.081	0.944	
Rules	Rules and procedures are very important to follow in this organisation.	4.48	0.681	0.664	4.356	0.703	0.8111
	Rules and procedures of the organisation is expected to be followed by everyone.	4.31	0.765		4.369	0.681	
	Policies in this organisation has to be strictly followed by the people.	3.99	0.786		4.004	0.858	
	Successful people in this organisation go by the book.	4.48	0.681		3.780	0.999	
Instrumental	I would never take home paper clips, stationery or other office supplies.	4.52	0.788	0.472	4.415	0.844	0.4515
	The major responsibility of people in this organisation is to control costs.	3.51	1.096		3.585	0.948	
	People try to protect their interest other than anything else in this organisation.	3.26	0.951		3.182	1.026	
	Organisation's interest is most important for the people excluding all else.	3.62	0.859		3.449	0.846	
	Whatever the consequences, individuals are expected to do anything for the interest of the organisation.	3.25	1.028		3.220	0.877	
Independence	Individual's sense of right or wrong is most important concern in this organisation.	3.61	0.934	0.517	3.3602	0.8105	0.5211
	Individuals are guided by own personal ethics in the organisation.	3.79	0.879		3.3475	0.9487	

Efficiency	Individual is expected to work efficiently above all in this organisation	4.22	0.599	0.603	3.949	0.792	0.8085
	The major responsibility of people in this organisation is to consider efficiency first.	3.90	0.804		3.792	0.801	
	In this organisation, for any problems efficient solutions are sought.	3.82	0.914		3.678	0.931	
	Always right way is the most efficient way in this organisation.	3.62	0.889		3.636	0.905	
Self interest	When making decisions, it is expected that everyone's care will be taken in this organisation	3.30	0.961	0.593	3.508	0.916	0.1838
	People in this company are very concerned about what is best for themselves	3.44	1.057		3.475	0.887	
	In this company, people protect their own interest above other considerations.	2.79	1.043		3.157	0.957	
Service	Persons expected to work efficiently	4.39	0.710	0.509	4.161	0.645	0.7928
	Always do what is right for students	4.05	0.857		4.186	0.782	
	People concerned about students	4.08	0.807		4.229	0.793	
	Effects of decisions on students taken appropriately.	3.71	0.741		4.064	0.799	
Social responsibility	It is expected that you will always do what is right for the customer and public.	4.17	0.750	0.745	4.246	0.696	0.8990
	In this organisation, individuals have high sense of responsibility towards outside community	3.75	0.962		4.017	0.855	
	Interest of the customer and public are given more concern by people in this organisation.	3.90	0.771		4.081	0.813	
	Primary concern in this organisation is the effect of decisions on customer and public.	3.95	0.759		4.021	0.838	
Range of Mean and Standard deviation (SD)		2.79 to 4.52	0.677 to 1.420		3.157 to 4.415	0.645 To 1.026	



**Fig. 1.** Characteristics of ethical climate



**Fig. 2.** Ethical climate reliability of scale for small and large sample

## 5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 above shows the result of 49 items and 12 dimension Questionnaires convey the meaning out of 50 samples. On the basis of mean and standard deviation 49 items are reduced to 36 items, 12 dimension to 9 dimension shows in the Table 4. And the scale for the questionnaire is administered using 5-point Likert Scale as shown in Table 3 to represent their agreement with each item. The Table 4 showing 9 dimension (Fig.1) and 36 items comparison of sample 77 and 236, which shows Mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha. There is a large difference between the both samples of study regarding of Mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha. In the variables/ dimension Caring, law code, rules, instrumental, independence, efficiency, service and social responsibility are having large difference in Cronbach's alpha from small sample to large sample have high reliability. But in self-interest have a low value Cronbach's alpha for the large sample. And for small and large sample the mean and standard deviation not having little variation with respect to sample size. In this Instrumental, independence and self-interest dimension having Cronbach's alpha less than 0.6, so this items you can't use for further analysis, but if you take

large sample and more items in each dimension may improve Cronbach's alpha (Fig.2) for further study either Institution and industries. Scale construction and Reliability testing for the sample size (N) of Pilot study is 77 and for final study is 236.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This empirical study involving 50 samples, 49 items and 12 dimension were chosen for pilot study to fix the items and dimension for developing the questionnaires before going for final study. Based on the survey results, items and dimensions of the Ethical climate were finalised. The dimensions were fixed on the basis of mean varies from 2.673913 to 4.195652 and standard deviation varies from 0.676736 to 1.322602 of each item of the questionnaires shown in the Table.2. After the final survey, dimensions were reduced to 9 (Fig.1) and those are namely, caring, law code, rules, instrumentals, independence, efficiency, self-interest, service and social responsibility. Ethical climate study at the individual level was also conducted, samples 77 and 236 individuals participated in the survey in 2 stages and they represent only 4 and 10 organisations participated during the two stages of survey. The details are shown in table 4. Ethical climate study at the organisation level also included 9 dimensions (Fig.1). It has been observed that mean varies from 2.7 to 4.52 Pilot study and final study 3.157 to 4.415 and standard deviation varies from 0.677 to 1.420 and 0.645 to 1.026 were almost same in both the studies conducted but there is large variation in Mean base value and Standard deviation of pilot study. But there has been large variation in the Cronbach's alpha from small sample to large sample. Some of the dimension of Ethical climate's Cronbach's alpha value less than 0.60 will not be considered for the future study. In Future studies some of the dimensions can be discarded which is having Cronbach's alpha less than 0.60, to reduce total number of Ethical Climate questionnaires to study in Institutions and Industries.

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