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THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMOTIONAL LABOR IN THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE ON BURNOUT

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the mediating role of emotional labor in the impact of organizational climate on burnout in accommodation establishments was investigated. For this purpose, a survey was conducted for 19 five-star accommodation establishments operating in Antalya, which has the most accommodation establishments in Turkey. In the study, which was carried out with a total of 976 participants, emotional labor, which is the mediating variable, was examined with its sub-dimensions, and impact analyzes were made with its sub-dimensions. The descriptive analyzes of the research were analyzed with the SPSS program, and the structural equation model was analyzed with the AMOS program. At the end of the analysis, it was seen that the organizational climate hurt burnout. With the inclusion of emotional labor, which is a mediating variable, in the model, it has been determined that emotional effort and emotional conflict, which are sub-dimensions of emotional labor, have a partial mediation impact on the effect of organizational climate on burnout. At the end of the research, recommendations for practitioners and researchers were presented.

Keywords: *Organizational climate, Burnout, Emotional labor, Mediation effect, Accommodation establishments.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is among the most important sectors for the country's economies with the amount of foreign currency it earns and the high employment rates it provides. The tourism sector is one of the sectors with a high staff turnover rate. A qualified employee who is not satisfied with the establishment s/he works for can easily move to another one. Therefore, it is significant that the perceptions of the establishment are monitored by the management, and the necessary arrangements are made. Besides, Mumcu (2021) states that the personnel who have inconsistency between their performance and behaviors should be specially considered by the organization.

Accommodation establishment employees develop perceptions of the establishment. These perceptions determine the quality of the service they offer. To ensure the quality of service, establishment managers need to direct the organizational behavior of the employees. To solve

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the problems at this point, the concept of organizational climate comes to the fore (Mumcu & Özyer, 2021). In this study, the impact of the organizational climate on burnout, which is very significant for accommodation enterprises, was investigated. In this effect, the mediating impact of emotional labor behavior in the service sector was tried to be determined.

Conceptual Framework

Organizational Climate

The concept began in 1924-1930 when a team led by Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger from Harvard University conducted a study at the Hawthorne plant owned by Western Electric. In this study, human relations were examined in the soft psychological environment and difficult physical environments (Zhang & Liu, 2010). However, the earliest reference to the concept is seen in the study in which Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) focused on the social climates they experimentally created in a group of young men. Although the organizational climate and different group atmospheres were proposed in this study, the organizational climate was not defined. Although Fleishman mentioned the relationship between leadership and organizational climate in one of his studies, the concept was not defined by him either (Fleishman, 1953). The concept of organizational climate was first defined by Argyris (1958) in a study in which the personality, needs, and values of employees in a bank were examined in terms of organizational policies (Argyris, 1958).

Definitions of the concept of organizational climate differ according to the perspectives of the researchers working in this field. The concept was first studied as individual perceptions in industrial establishments. The effects of these individual perceptions on the organization and the environment have been examined. After these studies, different perspectives were developed. Two basic opinions have emerged in determining the perceptions of individuals towards the organization. According to the objectivist approach, which is the first, the characteristics of the organization such as organizational size and organizational structure constitute the common perceptions of individuals. According to the second approach, the subjective approach, it is argued that the way the individual interprets the organization and the individual characteristics are effective in creating common perceptions of the organization (Young & Parker, 1999). The main question in the definition of the organizational climate is about the formation of individual perception. Is the climate of the organization related to the individual perceptions of the staff in the organization or is it a perception that arises from the characteristics of the organization (Arslan, 2004; Mill, 2016). Different definitions were made according to these two approaches.

Burnout

Emerged as a social problem before entering the organizational behavior literature. There are many literary works in history related to burnout. Although burnout is not defined in William Shakespeare's "The Passionate Pilgrim VII" (Schaufeli, 2017), German writer Thomas Mann's Nobel Prize-winning novel "Buddenbrooks" (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993), and English novelist Graham Grenne's "A Burnt-Out Case" (Maslach *et al.*, 2001), they describe individuals whose experience burnout. The first paper on burnout in a psychiatric journal belongs to Schwarz and Will (1953). Although not defined in this article, the burnout process is described step by step (Schaufeli, 2017; Gök, 2021; Katlav *et al.*, 2021; Kaynak, 2021; Macit, 2021; Seçkin, 2021).



According to the definition made by Maslach, one of the researchers who contributed the most to the burnout literature and is the most widely used definition, burnout is emotional exhaustion and cynicism syndrome that occurs among individuals working in human services (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In another study, Maslach and Jackson defined burnout as the syndrome of emotional exhaustion, desensitization, and decreased personal success among individuals working with humans (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). The extent of burnout is also defined in this study. Maslach defined the extent of burnout as emotional exhaustion, desensitization, and decreased personal success. To measure these dimensions, Maslach developed the Burnout Inventory. Burnout is a process that develops insidiously and slowly. It is a syndrome that negatively affects both the work-life and the private life of the workers (Azizoğlu & Özyer, 2010). Therefore, by observing the symptoms, it is necessary to take measures on time.

Emotional Labor

The concept was born out of the idea of managing emotions for professional purposes. The concept was first emphasized by Hochschild in American Delta Airlines stewardess training in the early 1980s (Veldstra, 2020) and was described in Hochschild's book "The Managed Heart". Hochschild explains the concept of marketing emotions in the service sector, explaining how stewardesses and debt collectors should manage their own emotions to appeal to customer feelings (Hochschild, 1983). Similar things can be seen in different studies (Acar & Çevirgen, 2021; Büyükyıldız & Özer, 2021; Kart, 2021; Yıldız *et al.*, 2021)

Hochschild described emotional labor as the management of a sense of creating a face and bodily image that can be observed by all. He stated that emotional labor is a value for change and can be sold for a fee and in this there are different approaches to the dimensioning of emotional labor. Hochschild proposes two dimensioning as surface acting and deep acting (Hochschild, 1983).

Relationships Between Research Variables

Different researches were carried out to determine the relationships between the research variables which is shown in **Figure 1**. A negative relationship was found between organizational climate and surface behavior, which is a sub-dimension of emotional labor, and a positive relationship between deep behavior (Xiaoyun & Yichen, 2007; Yao *et al.*, 2015). In the literature, a negative relationship between the organizational climate and burnout was detected. In a study conducted in schools, a negative relationship of organizational climate on burnout (Lavian, 2012), a negative relationship between supportive organizational climate and burnout in a study conducted in a community service institution (O'Driscoll & Schubert, 1988), and a negative relationship between organizational climate and burnout in a study conducted in the accommodation business (Vallen, 1993) were found. In studies aimed at determining the relationship between emotional labor and burnout, a negative relationship between deep behavior and burnout and a positive relationship between surface behavior and burnout were found (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Köse *et al.*, 2011).



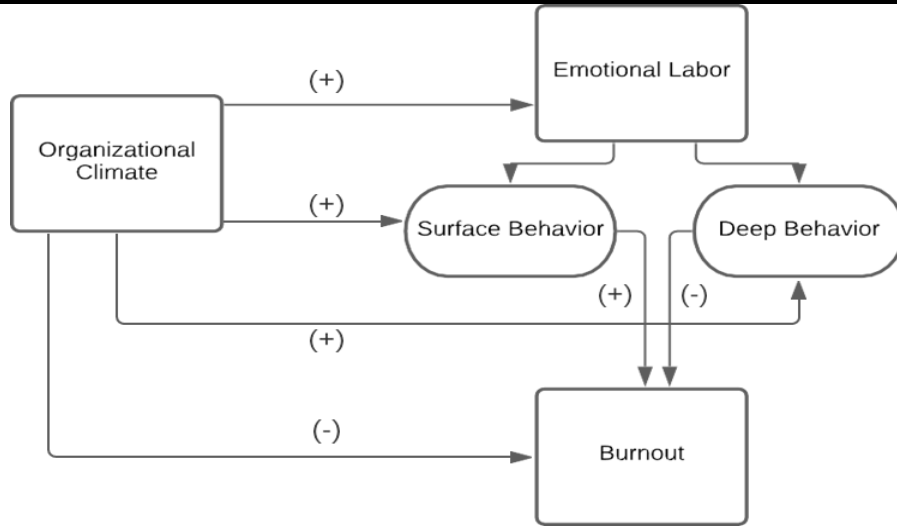


Figure 1. Relationships Between Research Variables Literature Model

Purpose and Hypotheses of the Research

The quality of the service offered in the tourism sector, which is a highly competitive and labor-intensive one, is one of the main factors determining customer satisfaction. The workers are expected to perform to meet the expectations of the customer and the organization. However, for the workers to meet these expectations, it is necessary to meet their expectations and to create an appropriate organizational climate. Accommodation establishment workers may experience more burnout because they work face-to-face with the customer constantly, and their working hours differ from other sectors. To ensure customer satisfaction in the sector, emotional effort must be exhibited, unlike many other sectors. To succeed in tourism establishments, it is seen as imperative that all these variables are kept under control, regulated, and managed.

In the light of this information, the main purpose of the research is to determine the mediating role of emotional labor in the impact of organizational climate on burnout in accommodation establishments. Another goal is to establish an effective pattern of behavior for accommodation establishments by examining the relationships between variables.

The hypotheses to be tested in the research for these purposes are as follows.

H1: Emotional effort has a mediating effect on the impact of the organizational climate on burnout.

H2: Emotional contradiction has a mediating effect on the impact of the organizational climate on burnout.

H3: The organizational climate meaningfully affects emotional conflict.

H4: The organizational climate meaningfully affects emotional effort.

H5: The climate of the organization meaningfully affects burnout.

H6: Perceptions of research variables vary according to employee demographics

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The universe of research is the employees of the accommodation establishments operating in Turkey. The sample of the research is the employees of the five-star accommodation

establishments operating in the Antalya region. The reason for selecting the sample is that accommodation establishments are concentrated in the Antalya region. According to Ministry of Tourism data, as of 2019, there are 4038 tourism business certificates, 723 tourism investment certificates, and 8104 municipal business facilities operating in Turkey. There are 847 five-star accommodation establishments in Turkey. There are a total of 407 five-star hotels and first-class resorts in Antalya. Due to the high number of employees, five-star hotels and first-class resorts were selected in the study. In the study, a survey was conducted with a random sampling method for 19 five-star hotel business employees. A total of 1200 survey forms were distributed and 1142 survey forms were collected. As a result of the evaluation, 166 survey forms were excluded from the evaluation, and 976 survey forms were included in the analysis. In terms of the number of businesses and participants reached, the study is one of the most comprehensive studies carried out in this field.

The research survey consisted of four parts: demographic characteristics, organizational climate measurement questions, burnout measurement questions, and emotional labor measurement questions. To measure the organizational climate perceived by the employees in the survey form, the scale of the organizational climate was developed by Koys and DeCotiis, (Koys & DeCotiis, 1991). This scale consists of 5 sub-dimensions and 15 expressions. The Turkish version of the scale, which was developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) and called the Maslach burnout inventory, (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). This scale consists of three subdivisions and 22 expressions. The scale developed by Chu and Murmann (2006) and validated in Turkish by Avcı and Boylu (2010) was used to measure the emotional labor levels of employees (Chu & Murrmann, 2006; Avcı & Boylu, 2010). This scale consists of two subdivisions and 10 expressions, emotional effort, and emotional conflict. The emotional labor scale was examined according to these two sub-dimensions in the study. In the secondary level multiple confirmatory factor analysis conducted for the scale, it was seen that the factor loads of the three statements did not reach a sufficient level and these statements were excluded from the analysis. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis performed to determine the construct validity of the scale, compliance goodness values for the two-factor structure of the scale were χ^2/df : 4.2, RMSEA: 0,069, NFI: 0.967, CFI: 0.972, GFI: 0.980 at $p < 0.01$ significance level. Compliance goodness values ($\chi^2/df \leq 4-5$) were found to have acceptable compliance index values.

IBM SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 20.0 package programs were used to analyze research data. In the analysis of the data, analyses such as frequency analyses, *t*-test, distortion, and pressure tests, one-way variance analyses were carried out with the SPSS program and mediation effect was made with the AMOS program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analyses carried out in this part of the research are interpreted. Demographic information of the study participants is given in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Findings of Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants

		Frequency	Percent			Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	339	34.7	Marital Status	Married	547	56
	Male	637	65.3		Single	429	44



Age	17-25	178	18.2	Education	Primary School	238	24.4
	26-32	292	29.9		High school	451	46.2
	33-40	295	30.2		Associate degree	141	14.4
	41-50	181	18.5		Bachelor's degree	140	14.3
	51+	30	3.1		Master's Degree	6	,6
Business Unit	Front desk	65	6.7	Working Year	1- 3 years	259	26.5
	F/B	258	26.4		4- 7 years	218	22.3
	Kitchen	239	24.5		8- 11 years	198	20.3
	Housekeeping	219	22.4		12- 15 years	128	13.1
	Human Resources	35	3.6		15+ years	173	17.7
	Technical	78	8.0				
	Security	48	4.9				
	Animation	14	1.4				

When **Table 1** is examined, it is seen that 34.7 percent of the participants are women, 65.3 percent are men, high school graduates are the highest number with 46.2 percent, and the majority of employees are between the ages of 26 and 40. In the survey study, the number of employees in the departments studied was taken into account when determining the participants. More employees work in the food and beverage, kitchen, and housekeeping departments in accommodation operations. These rates are seen in the survey results.

Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient reliability analysis results of the scales used in the study are acceptable. And all of them are follow; organizational climate is 0,796; burnout is 0,852; emotional labor is 0,699; emotional conflict dimension is 0,849 and emotional effort dimension is 0,622.

According to the results of the reliability analysis, it was determined that the burnout and emotional contradiction dimension scales were highly reliable, and the organizational climate and emotional effort dimension scales were moderately reliable.

One-way variance analysis (ANOVA) was performed to determine the significant differences between the participants' perceptions of organizational variables according to their demographic characteristics.

According to the results of the analysis, it is seen that all research variables differ significantly according to the operations and departments studied. According to the marital situation, the perception of the organizational climate and the perception of emotional labor by age have been significantly differentiated.

According to this information, the research's hypothesis "H6: Perceptions of research variables differ according to the demographic characteristics of employees" is supported.

To test the hypotheses of the research, the structural equation model is theoretically constructed. It was determined that compliance goodness values of this model, which was established by the observed variables method, were χ^2/df : 3.942 RMSEA: 0.052, NFI: 0.926, CFI: 0.962, GFI: 0.960 at $p < 0,001$ significance level. It has been determined that the model has good compliance values. It was determined that The regression values of the model were estimated at $p < 0.001$ significance level (β): -0.468, standard error: 0.030, standardized estimate: -0.445. According to the results of the structural equation model, a negative and significant effect of the independent variable of the research, the organizational climate, on the dependent variable

burnout (β : -0.45) was determined. According to this information, the research's hypothesis "H5: Organization climate significantly affects burnout" is supported.

The model was analyzed with the AMOS program by incorporating the mediating effect of emotional labor into the model. The final model in which the mediation effect is tested is given in Figure 2.

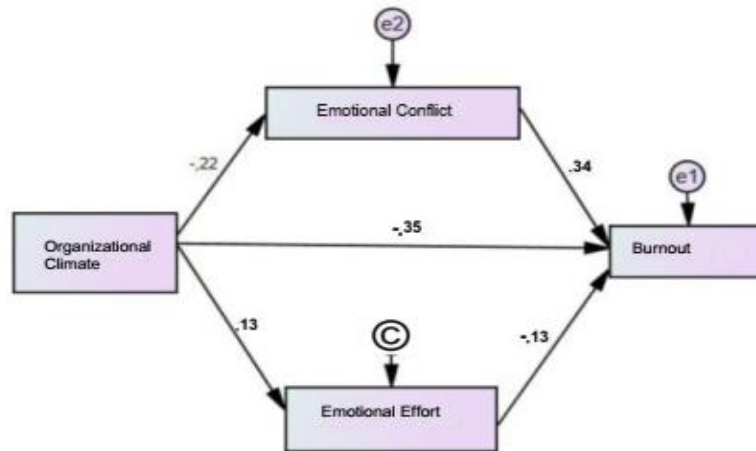


Figure 2. Research Model

According to the compliance goodness values given in Table 2 of the research model, the model has good fit indexes.

Table 2. Research Model Structural Equality Model Compliance Good Values

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI
Research Model	37.493	12	3.124	0.071	0.942	0.954	0.892

By testing the model, the ways of mediating the sub-dimensions of emotional labor among the research variables were determined. The path values that show the relationships for variables are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Weights for Meaningful Relationships Between Research Model Variables

Tested Path	Estimate (β)	Standard Error	Critical Rate	Standardized Estimate (β)	p
Emotional Effort <--- Organizational Climate	,380	,089	4.250	,135	***
Emotional Conflict <--- Organizational Climate	,448	,063	-7.064	-,221	***
Burnout <--- Organizational Climate	-,371	,029	-12.965	-,353	***
Burnout <--- Emotional Effort	-,048	,010	-4.818	-,128	***
Burnout <--- Emotional Conflict	,177	,014	12.701	,342	***

According to these data, the independent variable of the research hurts the variable emotional conflict (β :-0.22) that is the instrument of the organizational climate. The hypothesis "H3: Organization climate affects emotional contradiction in a meaningful way" is supported.



Another hypothesis of the study was established as “H4: the organizational climate meaningfully affects emotional effort”. According to the data, the climate of the independent variable organization has a positive effect on the intermediary variable emotional effort ($\beta:0,13$). With this information, it has been seen that the H4 hypothesis is supported.

According to **Table 5**, after determining the regression weights between the AMOS program and variables, the effects between the argument, dependent variable, and agent variables were analyzed. The analysis of the effects between variables is shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Results of Analysis of Effects Between Variables

Independent Variable	The Dependent Variable								
	Burnout			Emotional Conflict			Emotional Effort		
	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total
Organizational Climate	-,353	-,093	-,445	-,221	-	-,221	,135	-	,135
Emotional Conflict	,342	-	,342	-	-	-	-	-	-
Emotional Effort	-,128	-	-,128	-	-	-	-	-	-

According to the results of the model established to determine the mediation effect, both direct ($\beta:-0,353$) and indirect ($\beta:-0,093$) effect was determined between the organizational climate and burnout. The direct effect between the climate of the independent variable organization and the intermediary variables emotional effort ($\beta:0.135$) and emotional conflict ($\beta:-0.221$) was determined. In mediation models, there must be a relationship between independent and dependent variables. In the absence of such a relationship, mediation cannot be mentioned. There must also be a relationship between the argument and the agent variable for the mediation effect to happen. Otherwise, the mediation effect will not occur. The full and partial mediation effects should also be determined in mediation analyses. If the relationship between the agent variable is added to the analysis and the relationship between the argument and the dependent variable becomes weak or meaningless, the full mediation effect is seen if the agent variable measures part of the relationship between the variables (Yilmaz & Dalbudak, 2018). According to the results of the analysis, it is seen that there is a partial mediation effect between the variables. According to these results, the hypothesis “H2: Emotional conflict has an intermediary effect in the effect of the organizational climate on burnout” and “H1: Emotional effort has an intermediary effect in the effect of the organizational climate on burnout” are supported.

Whether the mediation effect between variables makes sense can be determined by different tests. These are Aroian and Goodman, MacKinnon and Dwyer, Sobel, etc. The significance of the mediation effect in the study was analyzed with the Sobel test. The result of the test is given in **Table 5**. According to the results of the Sobel test, all mediation effects ($p<0.05$) were found to be significant.

Table 5. Sobel Test Results of Mediation Significance Values

Path Relationship	Sobel Test (z value)	Sobel Test (p significance value)
Emotional Effort => Burnout	-3.19	0.001
Emotional Conflict => Burnout	-3.29	0.000

CONCLUSION

In the study, it was determined whether there were significant differences in the perception of the employees according to their demographic characteristics and their perception of the research variables. According to the *t-test* and ANOVA results performed for this purpose, it was observed that the perceived organizational climate was higher in single employees than in married employees. This can be explained for several reasons. Married employees may be demanding more respect and autonomy from their organizations because of their position in social life. Accommodation establishments are closer to the type of organization climate with autocratic structure due to their structure. Job definitions and tasks are defined. Employees cannot participate in decisions. Married workers who have taken responsibility for a family can ask for more responsibility and respect for their opinions. Significant differentiation is seen between the ages of 17-25 and 26-32 years in the emotional labor perceptions of the employees. It was observed that this perception was higher in the 26-32 age range when the perceptions of emotional labor were low in the age group at the beginning of the profession. Due to the characteristics of the sector, it can be said that the employees gain emotional labor behavior over time. According to the establishments studied, significant differentiation is seen for all research variables. The research sample is for employees working in establishments belonging to different groups of companies. Significant differences were observed in the perceptions of the employees belonging to the same group of companies. This is important to show the extent to which management style affects all variables. According to the results of the analysis, the highest perception of burnout was seen in technical department employees. It is seen that this situation does not match the literature. According to the literature, burnout is seen in employees who work face-to-face with the customer due to its structure. It can be said that the perception of high burnout detected in employees who do not work face-to-face with the customer is a situation that should be studied in more detail with other researchers.

In the study, the negative effect (-0.45) of the organizational climate on burnout was determined. This data shows that the organizational climate has a significant impact on burnout. Burnout, which is a dangerous situation that should be avoided for businesses, is very important in the accommodation sector, where the service produced depends on people. In accommodation establishments where customer satisfaction is very sensitive to employee performance, those who experience burnout will directly affect customer satisfaction. In the last stages of burnout, the employee can quit his/her job. This can cause problems in accommodation establishments where it is difficult and important to find qualified workers. For these reasons, the level of burnout in establishments can be reduced with positive regulations to be made in the organizational climate. In the study, emotional labor was examined with two sub-dimensions. According to the results of the analysis, differentiation was observed in these two sub-dimensions. It has been determined that the organizational climate hurts the dimension of emotional conflict and has a positive effect on the dimension of emotional effort. Emotional labor, defined as managing employees' feelings according to customer and business expectations, is very important for accommodation establishments. The emotional effort exhibited correctly shows positive results such as customer satisfaction. Emotional labor is displayed as surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting can reveal emotional conflict in employees and the consequences of this situation can be negative. Deep acting, on the other hand, harmonizes employee emotions with the behaviors that should



be shown, and therefore the emotional dissonance s/he will experience decreases. The results of the emotional effort of the employee are positive for the organization. The desired emotional labor behavior in organizations is emotional labor, which will be shown by adopting it with deep acting. In the literature, many studies have been carried out to determine the effect of the organizational climate on emotional labor (Xiaoyun & Yichen, 2007; Yao *et al.*, 2015; Tuna & Şalvarcı, 2017). According to the data obtained as a result of this study, the negative effect of the organizational climate on the dimension of emotional conflict and the positive effect on the emotional effort is compatible with the literature. It is seen that the climate of an organization organized by the organization in accordance with employee expectations has an impact on the emotional labor of the employees. In accommodation establishments, where the emotional effort of the employees is very significant, the importance of the organizational climate is revealed with these results.

According to the results of the structural equation model established to determine the mediating effect of emotional labor, the organization played a partial mediating role in the impact of the climate on burnout. It has been determined that the dimension of emotional conflict increases burnout, and the perception of a positive organizational climate reduces the emotional conflict that causes negativity in the employees. It has been observed that the emotional effort dimension reduces employee burnout.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Accommodation establishment managers should investigate the causes of burnout, which is undesirable, and eliminate the factors that cause burnout. According to the results of the study, the perception of the appropriate organizational climate reduces burnout. Regulation of organizational climate can be used as a key to reducing burnout. Management should share business objectives and policies with employees, make job descriptions, clearly state areas of responsibility, reward and punishment system, support for employees, and create a friendly working environment.

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