

# Stress Stimulators for the Employees of Service Industry in Dhaka & Its Vicinity

Mallick Rakibul Hasan<sup>1\*</sup> Tania Akter<sup>1,2</sup>

1. Department of Business Administration, BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology, 105 S.R. Tower, Uttara Commercial Area, sector-7, Uttara, Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh
2. Department of Business Administration, BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology, 105 S.R. Tower, Uttara Commercial Area, sector-7, Uttara, Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh

\*E-mail of the corresponding author: rakibrk@yahoo.com

## Abstract:

The aim of this study is to investigate the main causes of stress for employees working in service organizations in Dhaka and its vicinity. Stress is taken as dependent variable whereas independent variables are categorized into extra-organizational and intra-organizational stressors. Data were collected from service organizations including banks, insurance companies, universities and buying houses. Data were collected through self-administrative questionnaire consisting of 30 questions. Respondents were the employees working at different levels. From the results it was quite clear that employees working in different areas feel great stress, there were different causes due to which employee experience stress. Findings have been classified into extra-organizational and intra-organizational stressors. Extra-organizational stressors include variables such as Traffic Jam, Hyper Inflation, Political Unrest, Social Insecurity, Lack of transportation facility, insufficient income, Unemployment, Residential problems whereas intra-organizational stressors include variables such as inappropriate workload, Salary-responsibility mismatching, Recruitment policies, Over office timing, Career prospect, Working condition, Work-family balance issues. According to results the major intra-organizational stressor is workload (Mean-3.39, Median-3.00 and Mood-3) because employees are been utilized more than their capabilities, second major cause for stress is salary-responsibility matching (Mean-3.19, Median-3.00, Mood-3), as most of the employees feel that their salary is remarkably less than the responsibility they are taking over and the third major intra-organizational stressor is Recruitment policies (Mean-3.15, Median-3.00, Mood-5) as they feels this policy is not fair and transparent enough. The most influential extra-organizational stressor is Traffic Jam (Mean-3.27, Median-4.00, Mood-5) as in Dhaka city most of the people work in a distant place from home as because most of the offices are in the commercial elegant places where the house rent is too high and houses are not available as well, and the second influential extra-organizational stressor is Hyper Inflation (Mean-3.22, Median-3.00, Mood-3) as due to inflation purchasing power is reducing so people find it really difficult to fulfill their needs this ultimately results into stress, the third major extra-organizational stressor is Political Unrest (Mean-3.20, Median-3.00, Mood-3). These are the major three intra and extra organizational stressor on which the organizations and the country as a whole should concentrate to minimize it, as a stressful employee is less productive than a stress free employee.

**Keywords:** Stress, Service Organizations, Dhaka

## 1. Introduction:

Stress in the workplace is increasingly a critical problem for workers, employers and societies. Researchers who study stress in the United States have demonstrated the direct and indirect costs of stress. While stress has been studied frequently in the West, there has been little research on the topic in Southeast Asia. One recent study carried out in the People's Republic of China found higher job stress for Chinese managers with Type A personalities, but little else has been reported in research journals. Pakistan appears to be a prime country in Southeast Asia to study stress due to the rapid transformation of the city-state from a British colony have had to adjust to both the positive and negative effects of the quickened pace of life in a modern, industrialized nation. In fact, as early as 1984, Cooper and Arbose noted, managers in Pakistan show a higher incidence of stress symptoms than managers in the other highly such as the United States, Britain, Germany and Sweden. (p 22) There are many variables which have been related to work stress. Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) proposed a model of organizational stress research which outlined the major antecedents of work stress. They noted the importance of individual differences as moderators of stress and detailed possible outcomes of stress at work. Haviovic & Keenan (1991) in their recent work have again emphasized the importance of individual differences as moderators of job stress.

Role conflict and role ambiguity are among the antecedents of work stress which have been most cited in the research literature (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983). Role conflict, that is pressure to perform in two or more incompatible ways, has been tied conclusively to occupational stress in Western research. It has also been demonstrated to be a factor in job dissatisfaction and propensity to leave the organization one works for ever

since the classic work of Kahn and his colleagues (House & Rizzo, 1972; Hamner & Tosi, 1974; Van Sell, Brief & Schuler, 1981; Stout & Posner, 1984; Fang & Baba, 1993; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Role ambiguity, the lack of clear and specific information regarding workrole requirements, has also been linked repeatedly with job stress and low job satisfaction (House & Rizzo, 1972; Hamner & Tosi, 1974; Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1974; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Since role conflict and role ambiguity are issues in most Western organizations, they must be faced by Pakistani managers as well.

Many individual difference variables have been studied as moderators, that is, as characteristics which may either intensify or weaken the relationship among role conflict/role ambiguity and job stress. Most of these are personality variables including the need for achievement (Abdel-Halim, 1980), tolerance of ambiguity (Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1974) and locus of control (Abdel-Halim, 1980; Baths, 1980). The present study included two moderator variables — locus of control and tolerance of ambiguity. Locus of control was outlined by Rotter (1966) as the extent to which people believe that they control the outcomes in their lives (internal locus of control) versus those outcomes being dependent on fate, luck or powerful others (external locus of control). Research has frequently demonstrated that “internals” tolerate role ambiguity and role conflict better than “externals” and are less stressed. Locus of control may be particularly important to study in an Asian society where many people have been raised to believe that fate plays a big part in their success. This is indicated perhaps most graphically in the use of geomancers to specify the best dates to marry, to set up a business, to move to a new home, etc.

University teaching has traditionally been regarded as a low stress occupation (Fisher, 1994). Although not highly paid in comparison to professionals in the commercial sector, academics have been envied for their tenure, light workloads, edibility, ‘perks’ such as \*Author for correspondence overseas trips for study and/or conference purposes, and the freedom to pursue their own research interests. However, during the past two decades many of these advantages have been eroded. Academic salaries have fallen in real terms in countries such as the USA, the UK, and Australia. Increasing numbers of academic positions are now untenured, workloads have increased and academics are under increasing pressure to attract external funds, and ‘publish or perish’ (Fisher, 1994).

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related stress (WRS) as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them’ (HSE, 2006). Stress is the second most common cause of work-related ill health with 500 000 people in the UK experiencing it at a level which they believe is making them ill and with 12.8 million working days lost to stress, anxiety and depression in 2004–05 (HSE, 2006). It is the leading cause of work-related ill health in the education sector (HSE, 2006). The prevalence of WRS in the Bristol Stress and Health at Work Study 2000 (Smith, Wadsworth, Davey, Peters, 2000) defined as work which is ‘very or extremely stressful’, was 20%. Numerous studies have linked stress in the workplace to an increased risk of disease and ill-health with resulting sickness absence and decreased productivity.

Stress among information system (IS) professionals is long recognized as a key factor affecting IS productivity and turnover and leading to substantial associated costs. It is estimated that, on average, IS employees work 50 hours per week; almost half work an average of six hours on Saturdays and Sundays; and about 70% have worked while sick (King, 1995).

## **2. Objectives of the Study:**

The objective of the study is to find out the most influential stressor from among all the intra and extra organizational stressors that have a great impact on the productivity of the employees working in different service organizations in Dhaka and its vicinity.

## **3. Methodology:**

Primary data were collected from service organizations including banks, insurance companies, buying houses, universities. Respondent’s numbers were 100 and data were collected through self-administrative questionnaire consisting of 30 questions. The questionnaire was prepared on the basis of five-point likert scale method. Respondents were only the employees working at different levels of the organization.

Secondary data were also used in this study and the data were collected from different journals, books and online sources.

## **4. Literature Review**

Stress is defined in different ways as a condition of events creating controversy and confusion (Mason, 1975). Pressures people face in life is termed as stress, which can create tension on individuals thinking process, person’s emotion and physical condition (Newstrom and Davis, 2002). In addition it is termed as demands on individuals that put pressure for managing resources (Burke, 1991).

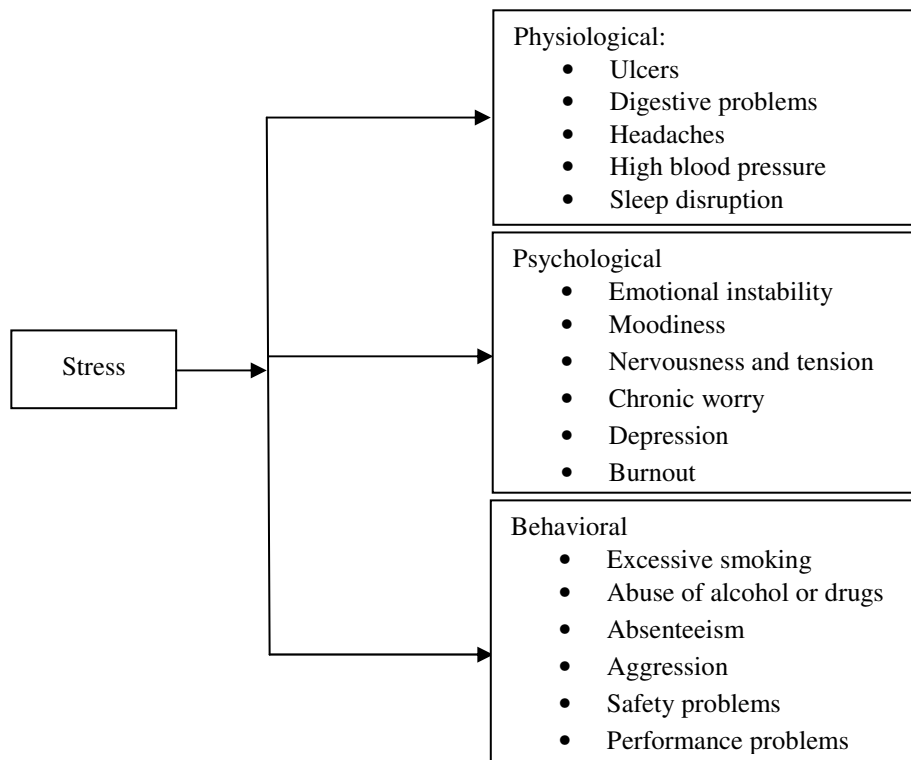


Figure 1: Typical negative symptoms of unmanaged stress (Newstrom & Davis, 2002).

Stress can be excessive and it can effect on job performance and health, can create tension headaches, where it can be short or long term, and mild or sever. If stress is for short time, people can survive with this, but if it is for longer periods, people become tired, lose their targets in professional life, and get separated from employees and work. Figure 1 shows physiological, psychological and behavioral negative impacts as a cause of stress to people in the society.

#### 4.1 Causes of stress

The reasons that create stress are called stressors where it can be organizational and non-work. There are differences among employees that impose employees to take these stressors positively or negatively with constructive or destructive organizational or personal consequences (see figure 2).

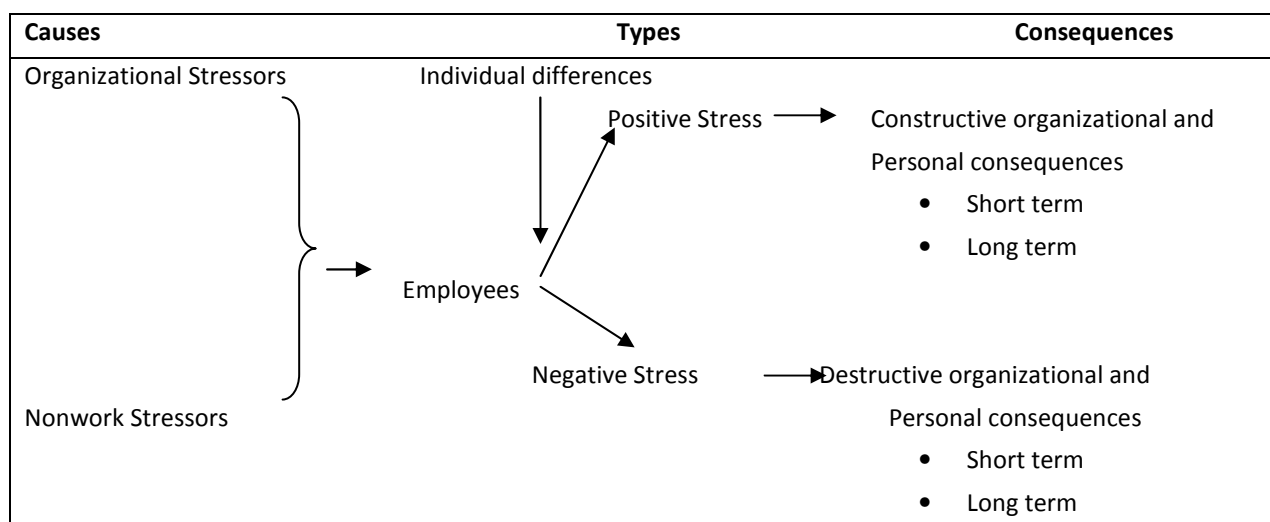


Figure 2: A model of causes, types and consequences of stress (Newstrom & Davis, 2002 and Schuler, 1982).

#### 4.2 Job related cause of stress

Studies have indicated that, job related stress arise from insufficient role-sending and role-receiving process. It is stated that based on the employee's attitude to job related stress, there is a phenomenon that some people adjust to the new work environment without feeling stress, where other may experience huge pressure from the same task. Management practices, leadership, position in the organizational hierarchy, various role requirements is found to have impact on stressors and associated outcomes (House and Rizzo, 1972; Miles, 1976 and Schuler, 1977).

In examining individuals' reactions to stresses generated by the work environment, most attention has been devoted to indices of psychological strain such as tension (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal, 1964; Alutto, Hrebniak, and Alonso, 1970), anxiety (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman, 1970; House and Rizzo, 1972), and job threat (Tosi, 1971). Other correlates of stress conditions reported in the literature include job satisfaction (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970; Brief and Aldag, 1976), organizational commitment (Hrebniak and Alutto, 1972) and propensity to leave the organization (Lyons, 1971).

- Workload
- Time pressures
- Poor quality of supervision
- Insecure job climate
- Lack of personal control
- Inadequate authority to match responsibilities
- Role conflict and ambiguity
- Differences between company and employee values
- Change of any type, especially when it is major or unusual
- Frustration
- Technology with training or support

Table 1: Typical causes of stress on the job (Newstrom & Davis, 2002)

Kirmeyer (1988) has studied that stress is affected by different interruptions such as work load and it is increasing because huge demands and pressures of many roles and identities that people are maintaining (Holroyd and Lazarus 1982 and House 1974). According to Fisher and Gitelson (1983) role conflict and role ambiguity are the prerequisites of work stress which have been most cited in the research literature which contributes to occupational stress and low job satisfaction (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983).

#### 5. Findings

From our study we have found out that there are a lot of stressors that people face very frequently. In this study all the stressors are categorized into two categories i.e. Extra Organizational Stressors and Intra-Organizational Stressors. Under these two broad categories of stressors, some are found to be very strong stressor and this study is focused on those stressors.

##### 5.1 Extra Organizational Stressors

Traffic Jam  
Hyper Inflation  
Political Unrest  
Social Insecurity  
Lack of transportation facility  
Insufficient income  
Unemployment  
Residential problems

##### 5.2 Intra-Organizational Stressors

Inappropriate workload  
Salary-responsibility mismatching  
Recruitment policies  
Over office timing  
Career prospect  
Working condition  
Work-family balance issues

In this study the result was calculated through the determination of statistical mean median and mode. This study covers only the employees working in different service organizations of Bangladesh in Dhaka city.

### 5.1 Extra-organizational Stressors

It is believed that stress is only caused by the factors inside the organization but this study proves that there are certain outside factors which cause stress for employees. The following chart will show us which extra-organizational stressors are stressful (see table 2).

Stressors	Mean	Median	Mode
Traffic Jam	3.27	4.00	5
Hyper Inflation	3.22	3.00	3
Political Unrest	3.20	3.00	3
Social Security	3.07	3.00	3
Lack of transportation facility	3.04	3.00	3
Insufficient income	3.04	3.00	3
Unemployment	3.03	3.00	3
Residential Issues	3.01	3.00	3

Table 2: Statistical analysis of major extra-organizational stressors

The following figure will show us the more validity of the results through showing the mean values of different major extra organizational stressors (see figure 2).

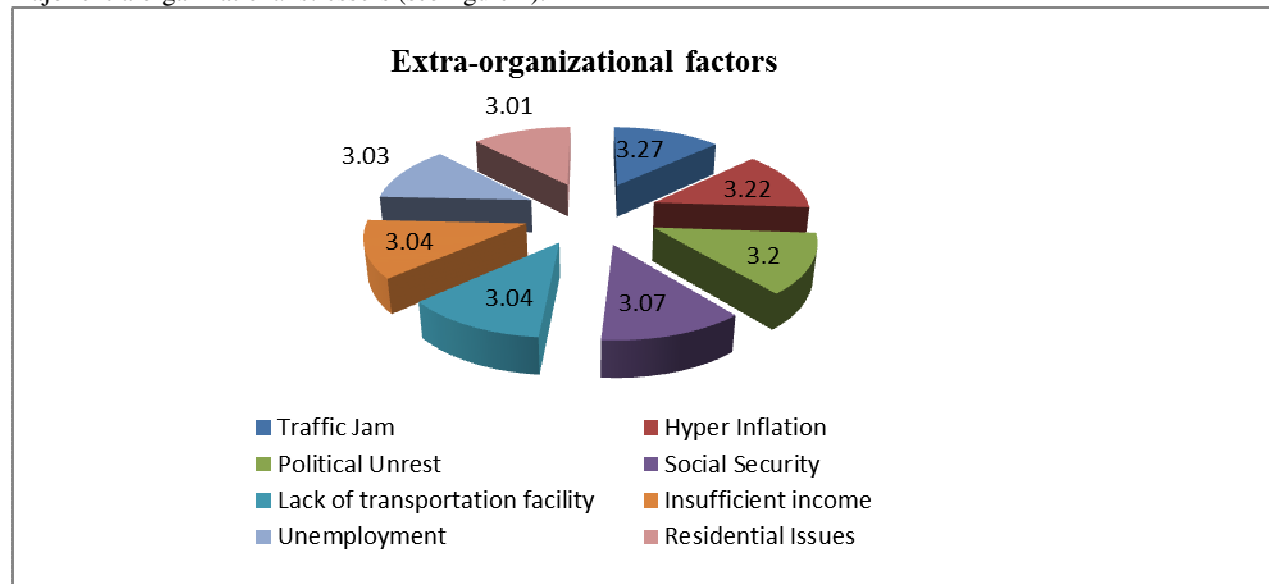


Figure 3: Mean values of major extra-organizational factors

The above table and figure show that traffic jam is the most influential extra-organizational stressor, as in Dhaka city most of the people work in a distant place from home as because most of the offices are in the commercial elegant places where the house rent is too high and houses are not available as well. That is why they have to come from distant places and have to get back to home as well. And from both the ways they face a terrific traffic jam which really stressful for the employees. According to the result of the study second major extra-organizational stressor is Hyper Inflation as because in overall Bangladesh the living cost is getting high, especially in Dhaka city. Due to inflation purchasing power is reducing so people find it really difficult to fulfill their needs this ultimately results into stress. Last extra-organizational stressor is political unrest, which is another problem for Bangladesh and this instability causes a lot of losses to the people and to the country as a whole. These three are the major stressor, but some other is mentionable, they are Social Security, Lack of transportation facility, Insufficient income, Unemployment, Residential Issues etc.

### 5.2 Intra-organizational Stressors

These stressors are present within the organization. It is obvious that employees are mainly stressed by the intra-organizational stresses. The following chart will show us which intra-organizational stressors which are found to be very stressful.

Stressors	Mean	Median	Mode
Inappropriate workload	3.39	3.00	3
Salary-responsibility matching	3.19	3.00	3
Recruitment policies	3.15	3.00	5
Over office timing	3.11	3.00	3
Career prospect	3.07	3.00	3
Working condition	3.04	3.00	3
Work-family balance issues	3.01	3.00	3

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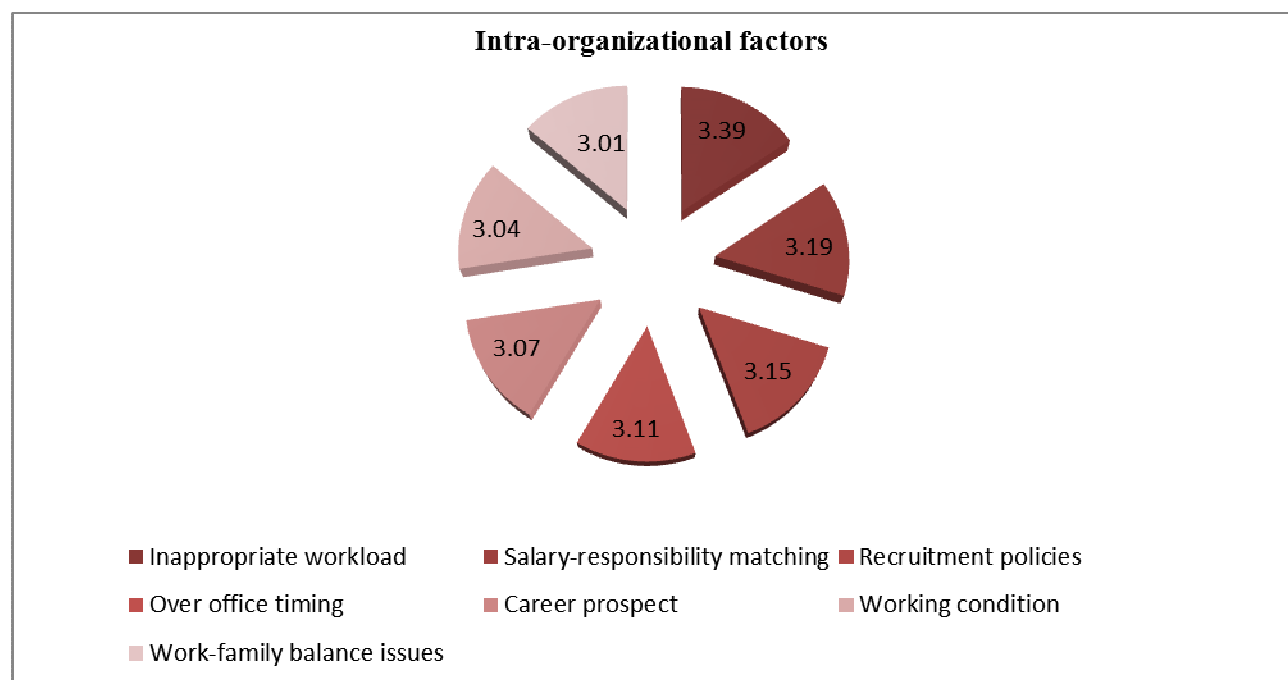


Figure 4: Mean values of major intra-organizational factors

It is obvious from the above chart and figure that major cause of stress is inappropriate workload, as employees are provided with really tough tasks and some believes they are asked to work more than their capabilities, and then the salary-responsibility matching, as most of the employees feel that their salary is remarkably less than the responsibility they are taking over and they are frustrated about the recruitment policies as well, as they feels this policy is not fair and transparent enough and then the next stressor is timings as it was said by most of employee especially working at banks that there is timing of coming to bank but there is no specific time to return their homes, therefore due to long hours of work they experience stress. Career prospect is another source of stress for the employees as to most of them their path is no cleared by the organization. Working conditions also cause stress these includes work environment, physical facilities and co-workers. Company policies stand last in terms of causing stress these policies include all rules and regulations concerning jobs such as salaries, vacations, bonuses, recognition, promotion policies etc. As the employees has to work for a long time they feel that they cannot provide proper time to their families, that is why they cannot execute proper responsibilities to their that is why they feel stressful.

## 6. Conclusion:

The current research highlights the causes of stress among employees in Dhaka and their vicinity. The overall fact is that the employees working in different service organizations in Dhaka city are really stressed by a lot of factors and the matter is that the extra-organizational factors work as a great source of stress for the employees which have a great impact on their intra-organizational performances. But the intra-organizational stressors are much more influential factors that stress the employees the most. It is fact that the organizations are enthusiastic

for the better employee performance because it has impact on the overall output of the organizations, but it is not possible to achieve if the employees are stressed enough. But for managing this stresses the organizations should not come alone, there should be proper employee participation and country Government support, so that we can expect an environment in which people will work enthusiastically for the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organization.

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