Workplace Fun and Job Satisfaction:
the Moderating Effects of Attitudes toward Fun

By

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Finally, we would like to thank to all of the respondents for spending their valuable time to complete the questionnaire.
Abstract

Happy workers are productive workers. High level of employee job satisfaction is absolutely an important determinant for company success. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction and determine whether employees’ attitudes toward fun moderate this relationship.

Data was collected from 102 employees from the Mass Transit Railway Corporation Limited (MTRC). The results supported the main effects that employees who experienced more fun in their workplace had greater satisfaction with their job. Besides, employees’ attitudes toward fun had moderating effect on the link between workplace fun and job satisfaction. In general, the participants in this sample expressed relatively positive attitudes toward fun.

The research contributed to the existing literature on the positive work outcomes associated with workplace fun. Moreover, it offered a useful approach to both researchers and practitioners, to pay attention on how individual attitudes toward fun affected workplace fun towards their job satisfaction. Specifically, placing higher value on fun, higher job satisfaction will be achieved. Theoretical and practical implications from the results and future research directions were also discussed.
Chapter I – Introduction

Are you having fun at work? Introducing fun at work is becoming many organizations’ concern for motivating and retaining their employees, or even distinguishing themselves from competitors. Changing workforce dynamics and providing a more causal work environment may be good for both employees and company. Some successful and renowned companies such as Southern Airlines and Googleplex may have led to a simple assumption that the more fun the better. According to Fortune 2002’s annual “100 Best Companies to Work For”, enjoying working environment was one of the important elements to distinguish better performers from others (Chan, Gee & Steiner, 2000; Joyce, 2003). In the U.K., it was estimated that those best companies spent €700 on each employee per year on fun activities averagely (Sunday Times, 2009). “We decided that while we always take our work seriously, we do not have to take ourselves so seriously. We can find ways to play.” said Lori Lockhart, director of the company's Global Connection Services department (Strand, 2000). Moreover, there are more and more Generation Y* in the job market who emphasizes work-life balance and pursuit of fun. They are flexible, team and fun-oriented (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Hence, it is important for the companies to instill fun elements into the working environment.

* Generation Y: The latest generation in the workforce who were born between 1981 and 2000.
Although there are more and more people notice the importance of workplace fun, there is still limited research on workplace fun, like defining what workplace fun is, when workplace fun can achieve its positive impact, or is there any negative impact to introduce workplace fun.

According to the 2009 Happy Planet Index (HPI) done by the New Economics Foundation (NEF), while Costa Rica was the happiest country in the world, Hong Kong scored just 41.6 over 100, which ranked the least happy in East Asia region. Hong Kong people are considered as worrying, anxious and unhappy group in the world, one of the reasons is that the working environment is too stressful. Moreover, there are still many companies in Hong Kong do not offer many fun activities for their employees, especially for some small organizations.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Previous studies have proved that interviewees who had positive attitudes toward fun and enjoyed fun at workplace were having higher job satisfaction (Karl, Peluchette, & Hall, 2008). However, not all the people have the same attitudes toward fun. Some people think that workplace fun can help to release their stress and motivate them to work happily in the company. In contrary, some employees do have negative reactions toward fun. For example, nurses from Missouri Baptist Medical Center in
United States responded negatively to workplace fun activities: “another program to drain more effort out of the staff” (Lundin, Christensen, Paul, & Strand, 2002). Thus, employees’ attitudes toward fun will be a key factor to determine the extent to which they value fun and give implications on whether imposing workplace fun will help to foster higher job satisfaction.

Regarding the little investigations about whether employees’ attitude toward fun will moderate the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction, a thorough study is needed to review how workplace fun actually correlates with job satisfaction and how employees’ attitudes toward fun will affect this relationship.

To test these hypotheses, we have to choose a company which is introducing certain amount of workplace fun activities to their employees. A company does not or seldom provides these fun activities will not be applicable in testing whether imposing workplace fun will help to bring a higher level of job satisfaction. Thus, we selected Mass Transit Railway Corporation Limited (MTRC) which is a famous and leading public transport corporation in Hong Kong. They offer many kinds of workplace fun activities to their employees, which is well-suited to be our target.
1.2 Purpose of the Study

This research aims to examine the relationship between workplace fun and employees’ job satisfaction, and the moderating role of attitudes toward fun on this relationship.

Findings from this research will be useful to MTRC and other organizations in taking account of workplace fun. For companies which their employees are working under stressful environment, it is more important to introduce more workplace fun to reduce job pressure. Also, companies which are suffering descending employees’ job satisfaction, this paper can work as a suggestion on introducing workplace fun to increase job satisfaction.

In this study, we reviewed past literatures about the three variables: Workplace fun, Attitudes toward Fun and Job Satisfaction. Then, we developed two testable hypotheses and discussed what our control variables, samples and methodology were. Finally, we presented the statistical results after our analysis, stated the limitations on our study and made suggestions on future research.
Chapter II – Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 Workplace Fun

Workplace fun, in many people’s mind, is adding happiness, joy and sense of humor into workplace. Having fun at work originated from the “Fish!” movie. It shows how employees who work in Seattle's world-famous Pike Place Fish Market can serve their customers happily because of their fun philosophy (Strand, 2000). Workplace fun was explored in a research by McDowell (2004), she defined workplace fun mainly into the following three aspects: “Fun climate” which is an atmosphere being developed in a company that supports fun at work like management encourage fun elements, “Fun person” which is the individual characters toward workplace fun such as playfulness, and “Fun at work” which represents fun activities that are enjoyable, amusing and playful. Apart from McDowell’s work, Fluegge defined workplace fun as “social, interpersonal, or task activities at work of a playful or humorous nature which provide an individual with amusement, enjoyment, or pleasure” (Fluegge, 2008). Failing to encourage workplace fun will not only weaken productivity, creativity, adaptability and morale, it will also affect employees’ mental health. This lack of workplace fun has been called Terminal Professionalism by two authors (Metcalf & Felible, 1992).
In addition, workplace fun can be classified into two types: the tangible and intangible fun. For tangible nature, workplace fun can be considered as some actual fun activities introduced by the company, which we called it tangible fun. For example, some included sport activities in workplace fun. Fun is to offer “video games, tanning beds, Ping-Pong, and indoor golf” and to allow employees to play kickball during their recess time (Meyer, 1999). Many press and book writers had suggested various of activities and ways to add fun into workplace, like Berger’s 52 Ways to Have More Fun at Work, Hemsath’s 301 More Ways to Have Fun at Work and Greenwich’s Fun and Gains: Motivate and Energize Staff with Workplace Games, Contests and Activities. (Berger, 2002; Greenwich, 2001; Hemsath, 2001). There were also many typical activities. For example, bring in food to company, give awards to outstanding staff, play mini-games, and form a committee to plan some funny activities (Karl et al., 2005).

For intangible nature, workplace fun can be considered as a kind of feeling or affection, atmosphere or climate reflected in the company, which we named intangible fun. There were many authors reported humor as an important element in workplace fun. Broussine, Davies and Scott (1999) had done the interview with certain social service workers and found some cases that it would be difficult to deal with stress without laugh, and thus humor could help to cope with distressing and
threatening events. Likewise, a study of humor showed that nearly 92% of nurses believed that laughing and sense of humor can help to reduce their workplace stress (Wooten, 1993). Humor helps to communicate and cope with stress while shared laughter enables people to connect in positive ways (Feigelson, 1998). However, there are also destructive humors. When the topic at hand is bad news, with serious life-changing consequences, it is not the time to try to be humorous (Feigelson, 1998).

As our moderator in this study, employees’ attitudes toward fun, is kind of intangible and abstract feeling, the nature of workplace fun we proposed in this study would be defined as the latter type.

2.2 Workplace Fun and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as “the extent to which a worker feels positively or negatively about his or her job” (Odom, Boy, & Dunn, 1990). People learn and achieve more when the process is enjoyable. It has been learnt that confidences about the job and experiencing an enjoyable mood during work could both contribute to the forecast of job satisfaction (Fisher, 2000; Ilies & Judge, 2002; 2004; Weiss, Nicholas, & Daus, 1999). Proponents of workplace fun claimed that when people are experiencing fun during work, they are more energized and motivated (Stern & Borcia, 1999), get along with others better (Meyer, 1999), deliver better customer
service (Berg, 2001), suffer from less stress (Abramis, 1989a, 1989b; McGhee, 2000; Miller, 1996), and are less probably to be absent or leave the organization (Mariotti, 1999; Zbar, 1999). Also, more and more practitioners urged that establishing a fun workplace environment is important for increasing employee motivation and productivity, lowering stress, and enhancing customer satisfaction (Lundin et al., 2002; McGhee, 2000; Paulson, 2001; Ramsey, 2001; Weiss, 2002).

Moreover, there are some empirical evidence showed the positive relationship between workplace humors or fun and employees’ job satisfaction. A survey done in Missouri Baptist Hospital showed that the number of employees who expressed “strong satisfaction” has increased from 25% to 75% after the hospital instilled the fun philosophy to employees (Lundin et al., 2002). Similarly, after introducing a more cheerful and happy workplace culture in Banner Thunderbird Medical Center over the past years, the center obtained an 80 percent approval rating which considered as “world class” from its employees (Patient Care Performed with Flair, 2009).

In the survey done by Ford, McLaughlin and Newstrom (2003) reported that “greater than 90% positive agreement that a fun work environment leads to increased employee enthusiasm, group cohesiveness, and employee satisfaction”. Job satisfaction shows “an employee’s affective response to his or her job” (O’Brien & Allen, 2008). It was also proved that there exist a positive relationship between
experiencing fun and job satisfaction (Karl and Peluchette, 2006).

The concept of “Need for Affiliation” by David McClelland may help to explain this relationship. According to McClelland’s Need Theory, there are three kinds of manifest needs, they are need for achievement, need for power and need for affiliation. The need for affiliation is talking about to build and maintain a relationship which is warm and intimate with the people around (Quick & Nelson, 2009). When a company provides a happy working environment and harmonious atmosphere to employees, this may help to build up good relationship among employees and colleagues can get better along with each others. Based on this developed relationship, employees will be motivated to do better and their job satisfaction will be increased. Thus, we hypothesize that:

*Hypothesis 1: Workplace fun is positively associated with job satisfaction.*

### 2.3 Attitudes toward Fun

Although adding fun into workplace seems beneficial to employees, there do exist some people who think it is inappropriate to introduce workplace fun and even oppose it. Employees may be dissimilar in their views about the appropriateness of having “fun at work” while some may respond with cynicism and resistance (Whiteley & Hessan, 1996). Aldag and Sherony (2001) advised that it would be too
simple to expect all the people would have resembling options about workplace fun. Rather, people are probably to be different in their opinions regarding 3 areas: (1) the significance of having workplace fun, (2) whether they feel workplace fun as suitable, and (3) their sensed results of workplace fun (Karl et al., 2007).

Attitudes toward fun will be affected by both individual and organizational characteristics. It was found that one’s early socialization experiences, work history, peer influences, and personality characteristics will affect his or her attitude toward fun (Aldag & Sherony, 2001). Karl et al. (2007) reported that more extraverted and emotionally stable people tend to have greater fun at work. Fun may play an essential role in their job satisfaction for those with high social needs (Clouse & Spurgeon, 1995). However, it may be less important for others. Hence, one might argue that the positive relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction will only occur to those with positive attitudes toward fun. In the research, we are going to see whether employees’ attitudes toward fun will moderate this positive relationship. We hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 2: The positive effect of workplace fun on job satisfaction will be stronger for employees who have more positive attitudes toward fun.**
2.4 Control Variables

(a) Age

It was found that generation will moderate the relation between workplace fun and job satisfaction. People in different generation perceive workplace fun differently. For example, Generation Y has stronger positive associations between workplace fun and job satisfaction than Generation X who was born between 1961 and 1980 (Lamm & Meeks, 2009). Besides, the results of a study also exhibited that higher the age of the employee, the higher level of their job satisfaction (Kumar & Girl, 2009). Further, Falcon (1991) found that aged managers expressed higher level of job satisfaction than younger managers. Thus, we have to control the age difference in order not to affect the testing of moderating effect of attitudes toward fun.

(b) Gender

Karl and Harland (2005) have done research and found out that male and female do have different attitudes toward fun. In addition, it was concluded that women had more job satisfaction than men in some studies (Clark, 1997; De Rijk, Nijhuis, & Alexanderson, 2009). Therefore, we considered gender as a control variable.
(c) Job Tenure

Employees who have longer job tenure in the company will have higher job satisfaction then those who have shorter job tenure (Theodossiou I. & Zangelidis A., 2009). Since employees who worked for a longer period of time tend to have higher organizational commitment and sense of belongings to the company, they are more satisfied to work there. We considered job tenure as a control variable.

(d) Marital Status and Educational Level

It was found that marital status and educational level will also all affect employees’ job satisfaction (King, Michael, Murray, & Tom, 1982). Thus, these factors should be controlled.
2.5 Conceptual Model of Hypotheses

Based on the research presented in the literature review, a conceptual model is developed. The model postulates the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction, and the moderating effect of attitudes toward fun.

IV

Workplace Fun

Attitudes toward Fun

MV

DV

Job Satisfaction

H 1

H 2

+ve

Fig.1: Conceptual Model of Hypotheses
Chapter III – Methodology

3.1 Sample

We had conducted a pilot test with 5 employees to make sure the questions were easy to understand for the respondents and there were a few amendments in the Chinese version of the questionnaire.

Data was collected using a questionnaire containing measures of workplace fun, attitudes toward fun and job satisfaction. It also covered the demographic characteristics of respondents. In addition to these survey instruments, a cover letter was enclosed in each questionnaire package. It further explained the objectives of the survey and assured respondents of anonymity and the voluntary nature of their participation in the survey.

The target participants are the full-time employees in MTRC. Questionnaire packages were distributed to the voluntary employees individually which they completed inside the company. Questionnaires were collected from late Feb to mid March and completed questionnaires were given to the Training Manager of MTRC for our collection. Of the total survey packets distributed (n = 130), 110 were completed and returned. Among these 110 received questionnaires, 8 were excluded since they had not been fully completed, while the remaining 102 questionnaires were all usable, yielding a response rate of 78.5%.
Table 1 shows the demographics data of the respondents from the observed samples. The final sample included 73 males (71.6%) and 29 females (28.4%). For age composition, only 1 respondent was below 19 years old and 5 employees were between 50 to 59 years old. More then one half of the respondents were between 20 to 29 years old (55.9%). The remaining percentage of respondents were distributed in the age range of 30 to 39 (25.5%) and 40 to 49 (12.7%). Majority of the respondents are single (65.7%) while 31.4% are married. In terms of education level, approximately half of the sample held bachelor degree (45.1%) and 8.8% even obtained master degree or above qualification. The remaining 19.6% studied up to secondary level or below and 26.5% were diploma or associate degree holders. In respect of job tenure, most of the respondents worked in MTRC for 1 to 5 years (30.4%), while others worked for 1 year or below (26.5%), 5 to 10 years (20.6%) and 10 years or above (22.5%).

Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤19</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
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<td>12.7</td>
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<td>50-59</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥60</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.2 Measuring Workplace Fun

The measure for level of fun experienced at work was adapted from a five items developed by Karl et al. (2007) as following: “This is a fun place to work”, “At my workplace, we try to have fun whenever we can”, “Managers encourage employees to have fun at work”, “We laugh a lot at my workplace”, and “Sometimes I feel more like I’m playing than I’m working”. Responses to each item were based on a five-point Likert response format (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). The Cronbach’s alpha of this scale was .89 for the total sample.
3.3 Measuring Attitudes toward Fun

We used the three attitudinal dimensions recognized by Aldag and Sherony (2001) to measure employees’ attitudes toward fun. They are appropriateness, salience, and perceived consequences of fun. A coefficient alpha of .88 was reported for this scale.

There were total 17 items: 4 items measuring appropriateness, 5 items measuring salience, and 8 items measuring perceived consequences. Three of the items were developed by Aldag and Sherony (2001) while others were developed by Karl and Harland (2005). Employees had to rate on a five-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). Nine of these items were reverse scored and the combined score was calculated as the average of the 17 items after reversing scored.

3.4 Measuring Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured using the five items developed by Lytle (1994). Respondents were required to rate on a five-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). Sample items included “I consider my job pleasant” and “I feel fairly-well satisfied with my present job”. The Cronbach’s alpha for the job satisfaction items was .96 for the total sample.
3.5 Data Analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses. Previous studies have showed that some demographic variables will affect the captioned research variables. Hence, variables including gender, age, marital status, educational level and job tenure were controlled and entered in Step 1 of the regression analysis. In Step 2, the predictive variable (workplace fun) and moderator (attitudes toward fun) were entered simultaneously for testing the main effect. Finally, the moderator (attitudes toward fun) was entered again in Step 3 and interacted with the predictive variable (workplace fun) to test the moderating effect. To run the above regression model, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical software was used.
Chapter IV – Results

4.1 Zero-order Correlation

Table 2 shows the Cronbach’s alpha reliabilities, mean scores, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations among the studied variables. The mean scores indicates that respondents commonly experienced moderate levels of workplace fun (M = 3.50, SD = .88) and job satisfaction (M = 3.56, SD = .99). Besides, they placed a somewhat high value on attitudes toward fun (M = 4.15, SD = .49). As shown in the Table 2, a significant positive relationship was found between workplace and job satisfaction (r = .729, p < .001). This result provides support for Hypothesis 1. Besides, attitudes toward fun was also correlated positively with workplace fun (r = .304, p < .01) and job satisfaction (r = .354, p < .001).
## Table 2: Reliability Estimates, Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for all Variables (N=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender a</td>
<td>1.2843</td>
<td>.45331</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age b</td>
<td>2.6471</td>
<td>.89716</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Marital Status c</td>
<td>1.3725</td>
<td>.54358</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>.536***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Educational Level d</td>
<td>2.4314</td>
<td>.90663</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td>-.200*</td>
<td>-.209*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Job Tenure e</td>
<td>2.3922</td>
<td>1.10943</td>
<td>-.165</td>
<td>.628***</td>
<td>.527***</td>
<td>-.199*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Workplace Fun</td>
<td>3.5039</td>
<td>.88047</td>
<td>-.124008</td>
<td>.207*</td>
<td>-.096</td>
<td>-.156</td>
<td>.232*</td>
<td>(.892)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Attitudes toward Fun</td>
<td>4.1448</td>
<td>.49296</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>-.253*</td>
<td>-.145</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.174</td>
<td>.304**</td>
<td>(.876)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.5569</td>
<td>.98970</td>
<td>-.268**</td>
<td>.286**</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>-.103</td>
<td>.351**</td>
<td>.729***</td>
<td>.354***</td>
<td>(.958)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:  
* a Cronbach’s alphas appear on the diagonal in parentheses.  
* p < .05 (2-tailed).  
** p < .01 (2-tailed).  
*** p < .001 (2-tailed).  
  a 1=Male; 2=Female  
  b 1=Under or equal 19 years old, 2=20 to 29 years old, 3=30 to 39 years old, 4=40 to 49 years old, 5=50 to 59 years old, 6=60 or above  
  c 1=Single, 2=Married, 3=Other  
  d 1=Secondary or below, 2=Diploma/Associate Degree, 3=Bachelor Degree, 4=Master Degree or above  
  e 1=Below 1 year, 2=1 to 5 years, 3=5 to 10 years, 4=10 years or above
4.2 Hierarchical Regression Analysis

To test the main effect and see if attitudes toward fun moderate the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction, we conducted a hierarchical moderated regression analysis and the results were displaced in Table 3. Before running these analyses, the independent variables (workplace fun) and moderator (respondents’ attitudes toward fun) were standardized, and then were entered in to a three-step regression equation.

As indicated in the Model 2 column in Table 3, workplace fun was found to have significant positive relationship with job satisfaction ($\beta = .561, p < .001$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. In other words, the provision of workplace fun leads to higher job satisfaction.

The interactive effect of attitudes toward fun with workplace fun on predicting job satisfaction was also examined in the last step of the hierarchical regression. A significant positive relationship was found in Model 3 in Table 3 ($\beta = .020, p < .05$). This provided support to Hypothesis 2.

Figure 2 further shows the finding summary of the regression analyses.
Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Analyses of the Interaction between Workplace Fun and Attitudes toward Fun on Job Satisfaction (N=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dependant Variable: Job Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.233*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>-.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
<td>-.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Tenure</td>
<td>.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward Fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Fun x Attitudes toward Fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F Value                  | 4.306   | 25.155  | 23.775  |
R²                       | .183    | .652    | .672    |
Adjusted R²              | .141    | .626    | .643    |
∆R²                      | .183    | .058    | .020    |

Standardized betas are reported here.

Note:  * p < .05  (2-tailed).
        ** p < .01  (2-tailed).
        *** p < .001 (2-tailed).
To further investigate whether the interactive effect was in the hypothesized direction, two regression lines were plotted on the graph in Figure 3 by entering formulas in Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet. As predicted, people with more positive attitudes toward fun express higher level of job satisfaction than people with less positive attitudes toward fun upon the provision of workplace fun. This result further supported Hypothesis 2.
Workplace Fun and Job Satisfaction: the Moderating Effects of Attitudes toward Fun

Fig. 3: Interaction of Workplace Fun and Attitudes toward Fun on Job Satisfaction
Chapter V – Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion

The finding of this study provides a better understanding of MTRC employees’ value of workplace fun, the extent to which they experience fun in the workplace, and their level of job satisfaction. It illustrates similar results with other previous research. Workplace fun was found to be positively related to job satisfaction. Not surprisingly, positive feeling associated with workplace fun influence feelings about one’s job. Many studies had discovered that positive feelings tend to generalize or spread from whatever caused them to other stimuli in the temporal and social context (Forgas, Bower, & Krantz, 1984; Isen, Clark, & Schwartz, 1976). By providing opportunities for employees to experience fun in the workplace, MTRC can benefit from lower staffing costs because job satisfaction is related to turnover intention strongly (Kim, Leong, & Lee, 2005). MTRC can also gain advantages in terms of its good employer reputation.

Additionally, the present study showed that employees of MTRC placed high value on workplace fun, and the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction was greater for those who have positive attitudes toward fun. To be specific, for employees who value fun and experiencing workplace fun will have the highest job satisfaction. However, for those who place less value on workplace fun but are not having fun will have lowest job satisfaction. According to this finding, it was clear that there were
individual differences in the attitude towards fun and it played a key role to determine the extent of implementing workplace fun in fostering higher level of job satisfaction. From Locke (1976), “job satisfaction results from the perception that one’s job fulfills or allows the fulfillment of one’s important job values.”

Moreover, different individuals have different needs. According to McClelland’s Need Theory, some people have higher need for affiliation, whereas others may have moderate or low need for affiliation (Quick & Nelson, 2009). In our findings, employees in MTRC have relatively positive attitudes toward fun, which imply they have quite a high need for affiliation. They seek for establishing a warm and close relationship with other people, thus when MTRC provides a happy workplace to them, they will be motivated and satisfied.

Besides, the significant moderating effect further emphasizes the importance of employees’ attitudes. It is consistent with the usual practice in recruitment processes that to “hire attitude and teach skills” (Kuchta & Berg, 2004). Candidates’ attitude is an important element to be considered during recruitment and selection processes, and company should find out whether such attitudes are consistent with the company’s culture.
5.2 Implication

Our findings contribute to both theory and practice. For the workplace fun literature, similar to previous findings that workplace fun has a positive link with job satisfaction (Karl et al., 2007). Besides, there was lack of studies using attitudes towards fun as a moderator in testing the proposed relationship. Therefore, we add the construct with our evidence that attitudes toward fun also impact the outcomes of workplace fun. Besides, we provide validation for the previous developed scales measuring workplace fun, attitudes toward fun and job satisfaction.

For practical implications, our results clearly show that workplace fun should be implemented carefully by considering whom the fun is being directed. Before launching any workplace fun activities, practitioners should conduct a survey to find out whether employees put a high value on workplace fun. If so, companies should actively promote a happy working environment. On the other hand, MTRC should also ensure that these workplace fun activities will be well received by their employees and that the use of such activities is likely to result in positive outcomes for both employees and the organization.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

The present study is subjected to several limitations. First, the term “Workplace Fun” is relatively a new topic in research field. Most of studies relating to workplace fun are mainly
published in 21 century. Unlike those studies on job satisfaction, there is lack of supports for implications on workplace fun and attitudes toward fun. For example, there is only one measuring instrument of Attitudes toward Fun which was developed by Aldag and Sherony (2001) and Karl and Harland (2005). Moreover, all of these findings were investigating foreign employees’ phenomenon, it may not reflect the real working situation in Hong Kong.

Second, the sample of this study was from one public sector and the size was not large enough. Thus our research setting may limit the external validity of these findings and the results may not fully represent the perceptions of the general population. Future research should include more and broader representations from different kinds of industries.

Third, in this study, all of our samples are full-time employees, hence our findings might not apply to those part-time employees. However, to reduce labor costs and enhance flexibility to suit different business projects, many organizations in Hong Kong are now recruiting more part-time labors. Hence, future research on part-time workers is recommended.

Fourth, according to the results, we found that Hong Kong people intended to choose the answer in the middle (neutral). They may find it difficult to choose an answer on a five-point Likert scale. A seven-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Neutral, 5=Slightly Agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly Agree) is
suggested to measure the workplace fun and job satisfaction in future research, which can help to generate relatively accurate results.

Furthermore, we encourage future research to investigate further potential moderating variables. Previous research found that employees’ attitudes and subsequent behaviors would be affected by organizational collective culture (George A., Marcoulides & Ronald H, 1993). Hence, future research can use company culture as a moderator to see if it influences the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction. Another variable which warrants investigation will be employees’ level of job stress since this is one of the workplace problems in Hong Kong now and it is worth to study whether it will lead to different results.

Finally, we would also recommend research on testing how customers react to workplace fun. While previous study had showed a relationship between employees’ job satisfaction and customers’ satisfaction (Kaldenberg & Regrut, 1999), there is no study straightly measuring customers’ reactions to employees who are experiencing fun at work. Workplace fun may be appreciated by customers in restaurants or retail stores since they like being served by happy staff. However, this may not happen in financial or health care industries where customers may expect a serious atmosphere and professional service manner. The age or gender of the customers may also have different perceptions on workplace fun.
5.4 Conclusion

This research provides more insights for practitioners to adopt a new process to exam the linkage between workplace fun and job satisfaction. Apart from understanding the outcomes by creating workplace fun only, looking at the moderating effect of employees’ attitudes toward fun is also considered as a useful way in this study. It was clear that attitudes toward fun directly change the strength of the relationship between workplace fun and level of job satisfaction.

Since the financial tsunami, Hong Kong employees were facing more and more occupational stress in their workplace and thus their happiness has been deteriorating. In this ever-changing and competitive society, it is important for companies to provide a happy working environment for their employees, as happy employees can help to improve productivity which make the company to survive in the market. It is essential that before developing such a happy workforce, company should make sure their employees are having positive attitudes toward fun.

Finally, we hope this study serves as a stimulus for future research that attempts to exam new research directions and to find out more benefits for companies by developing funny workplace.
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